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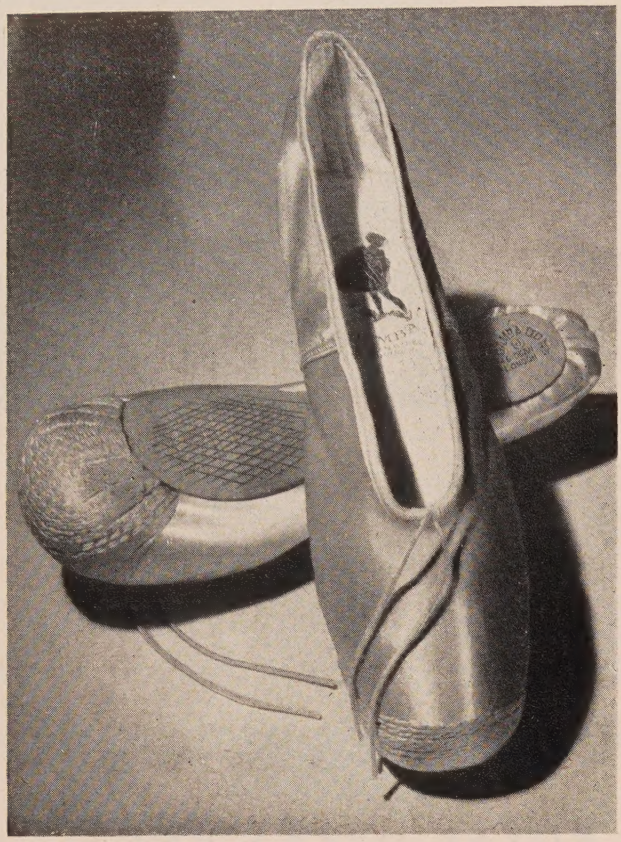

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## Cover Stories

**This month's front cover, by Roy Round, is of Belinda Wright in David Lichine's *Concerto Grosso en Ballet*. She is one of the principal dancers with Festival Ballet now at The Royal Festival Hall.**

BELINDA WRIGHT was born at Southport, Lancashire. There she studied at the Halliwell School of dancing. At the age of sixteen she went to see the Ballet Rambert when they were appearing in Manchester. She was accepted for the Rambert School and then went into the company. She started to be noticed when the Ballet Rambert were at Sadler's Wells Theatre prior to their tour of Australia. During the Austalian tour she started to take over important roles. Back in England, two years later, she went to Roland Petit's Ballets de Paris. With that company she went twice to the United States returning to England in 1951 when she immediately joined Festival Ballet.

**Our back cover, by Roger Wood, is of George Skibine who is the principal male dancer of the Marquis de Cuevas Grand Ballet.**

GEORGE SKIBINE was born at Yasnaya Poliana near Kharkov in Russia. Studied with Preobrajenska and Lifar in Paris; Oboukhoff, Vladimiroff and Vilzak in New York. His father was a dancer in Diaghilev's company. Skibine's first stage appearances were in circus and the Bal Tabarin in Paris. He was a soloist with René Blum's Ballet (1938); principal dancer with Original Ballet Russe (1940); Ballet Theatre (1941); U.S. Army (1942-45); Massine's Ballet Highlights (1945); Original Ballet Russe (1946); Marquis de Cuevas Company (1947). With this latter company he has remained to this day.

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August 1952 Vol. 3. No. 8

# Dance and Dancers

*Editor:* PETER WILLIAMS

*Assistant Editors:* CLIVE BARNES- DAVID RAHER

WORLD'S LARGEST NET SALE IN THE FIELD

**The opening night of New York City Ballet, July 7, was brilliant from the audience point of view. Much of what happened on the stage was on the same level. As with the previous visit of this company there has been already a good deal of controversy. As a hands-across-the-Atlantic gesture, we are handing over this month's Editorial space to Anatole Chujoy, editor of American *Dance News*, who is in this country for the season. In our next issue we shall review the season in full.**

## The Piper was a Clarinettist . . .

IT is not often that an editor gets a chance to sound off in a publication other than his own, especially on a touchy subject like other writers. My thanks, therefore, to the Editor are sincere.

Reading carefully the London notices about the first two programmes of the New York City Ballet now at Covent Garden I was rather surprised at the manner in which some of them were written. I am not complaining, of course, about adverse criticism, that is the critics' prerogative. I only wonder whether we saw the same performances.

Here are a few examples.

Here, for instance, is Mr. John Carpenter of *The Evening News*. He discovered gaiety in the tragic *La Valse* and some "surprisingly ragged dancing" by the *corps de ballet* in *Serenade*, but he does not say where. He judged Balanchine's version of *Swan Lake* "as a whole successful", but bemoaned the presence of the "mechanically propelled swans" at the curtain's rise. "This touch of pantomime," he thought, "was hardly a happy start." This touch of pantomime, someone should inform Mr. Carpenter, is not an invention by Balanchine. The St. Petersburg production, on which all contemporary productions of *Swan Lake* are based, used twenty. The less affluent Diaghilev company and the sundry Ballets Russes that followed it employed one. What, then, is wrong with eight? Mr. Carpenter, too, found Cecil Beaton's set "not unlike a Victorian engraving", when, as the programme note stated, the design was based on drawings by Altdorfer, Deutsch and Dürer. He also thought that it was a pity that the *corps de ballet's* skirts were so short. Actually, they were as long as the usual tutus in *Swan Lake*. Perhaps it is Mr. Carpenter's memory that is on the short side? He found further that *The Pied Piper* "belongs to a genre in which the New York City Ballet excels: witty and gaily inconsequential". Which ballets in the company's repertoire belong to this genre: *Age of Anxiety*, *Orpheus*, *The Prodigal Son*, *The Cage?*

The review of *Swan Lake* in *The Times*, unsigned as always, paid tribute to Balanchine's musicality but opined that "his determination to be different led him to forget more and more the farther he went that his *corps de ballet* consists of swan-maidens, until at last their final flutters were all hands to the pumps—a most incygnificant sort of action." I'll admit that the "incygnificant" is a clever pun and neatly worked into the paragraph, but is it ballet criticism? Isn't the *corps* rather more "maiden" than "swan"? Otherwise, where is the drama in the ballet? And if so, wouldn't the climactic moment of the maidens' involuntary return to swandom call for accelerated action rather than the placid exit in the more conventional productions of the ballet? And is it not just a bit ungracious to accuse a serious artist like Balanchine of a "determination to be different". A serious artist is different without a determination to be so. That is why he is a serious artist.

And here is Mr. Scott Goddard of the *News Chronicle*. He rather liked *The Pied Piper*, found it amusing and well presented and said so in the last three lines of his review. But he took seven lines of a total of thirteen to say that the ballet "has nothing to do with the accepted notion of that famous tale. There were no rats, no children, and the piper was a clarinettist. . . ." Horror of horrors! How literal can one get?

Most interesting to me were the notices about *The Cage*. Quite properly no one was shocked by it; one or two found it repelling; others old hat; most credited Robbins with imagination; all praised Nora Kaye's performance. But no critic realised or at least said so, that *The Cage* was only Act 2 of *Giselle* in a neo-romantic setting. Granted the Novice and the Queen are horrid, but what about the Queen of the Wilis and Giselle? Isn't the difference only in style, not in the subject matter?

Mechanical swans, live clarinettists and tutus, long or short, are only appurtenances in ballet, the dance is the art on which ballet stands or falls. About this some of the London critics do not seem to have much language, not even puns.

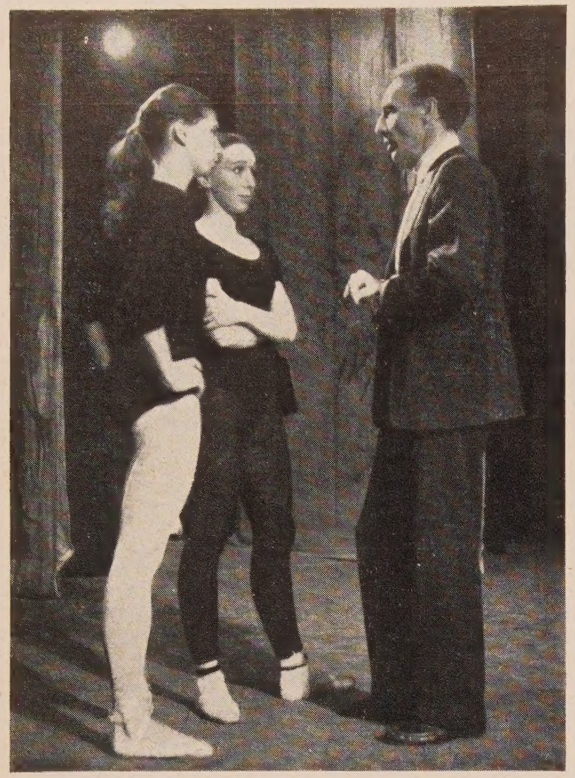
**Anatole Chujoy**

# THE NEW YORK CITY BALLET *in rehearsal*

**Instead of our usual feature in which a famous photographer chooses his favourite photographs, we are presenting a series of pictures, through the number, of the companies who are appearing, or will appear, in England during August and September.**

**That distinguished American company, New York City Ballet, is at The Royal Opera House, Covent Garden, until August 21. From August 25 to 30 they will be at the Edinburgh Festival.**

**The Covent Garden season will be reviewed in full together with photographs of the principal dancers and ballet, in the September number.**



*The artistic director and principal choreographer, George Balanchine, discusses the ballet with Ruth Sobotka and Arlouine Case*

Above: *Tanaquil Le-Clercq rests against a piece of scenery during a rehearsal*

Left: *The company in rehearsal at the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées during their Paris season. Nicholas Magallanes, the principal male dancer, is seen centre supporting Patricia Wilde*

*The ballet in rehearsal is Balanchine's* Four Temperaments. *This work, to Paul Hindemith music, has been revised since the company was last seen in London*

*Photos: Roy Round*

# Kirstein talks

by

DAVID RAHER

**The Director of New York City Ballet is one of the most forceful personalities in American ballet. By virtue of his background, education, versatility and idealism, he has set a new standard. Through his writings he has recorded the history and development of ballet, as well as revealing his complex and sometimes fascinating personality.**

THE most conclusive fact about Lincoln Kirstein is his volubility. Kirstein at a loss for words is about as conceivable as the earth not rotating. Logical, concise and incisive, his opinions cut through a welter of information and argument with the precision and finality of a harvester through a corn-field. In this manner, the imprint of his voice has become engraved on all subjects related to the arts; painting, sculpture, literature, music and the dance.

There is about his writing a visible impatience, an urgency which leaves the reader, if somewhat enobled, despairingly limp. His writings have been motivated by feelings of defence, protest, explanation and frequently downright disgust. A love of writing for its own sake is not often discernible.

### 1927

Kirstein appeared in print as early as 1927, at the age of twenty. In the literary magazine *Hound and Horn*, of which he was both founder and editor, he was supplied with the whetstone upon which to sharpen his blade for future editorial forays. His reaction to Theodore Dreiser's autobiography *Dawn*, for example, reviewed in *Hound and Horn* (Oct.-Dec., 1931) smacked of intolerance. Kirstein wrote: "His freedom and intensity are typical of the American gigantomania, from flag-pole sitting to the building of the biggest building in the world, although the only compulsion to build is the desire for an immediate prestige."

His unwillingness to accept mediocrity and his relentless striving towards perfection were seen early in his career. Reviewing Norman Bel Geddes' production of *Hamlet* he wrote, in the *Hound and Horn* (Jan.-Mar., 1932): "Mr. Bel Geddes did Shakespeare a certain favor. Under the welter of inconsistencies, in the abysm of his unfailing evil taste, the play remained unquenchably and indestructibly absorbing—although it presupposed, as here presented, a thorough knowledge of the folios before one entered the theatre."

In an addendum to this review he writes with agonizing torment of a performance of O'Neill's *Mourning Becomes Electra*, "Here is creation: in a way amplification. Only when one is given so much one wants as much more. One wants a realised work, inevitable and heroic."

And so Kirstein unfurled a crusader's banner in the face of the arts; sometimes acknowledging the good but more often defying the existence of what he considered worthless. Nor were his contributions solely confined to the pages of *Hound and Horn*. Cursory research credits him with an article on the evils of publishing printed in the *Boston Evening American* on Feb. 26, 1932, under the heading of Books and Characters; and two years before the demise of *Hound and Horn* he produced a novel, *Flesh is Heir*, dated March, 1932. This was followed by a book of poems in 1935, entitled *Low Ceiling*.

But not even the consistent output of critical essays and occasional sidetracks into creative writing could sufficiently divert Kirstein from his growing preoccupation with ballet. An interest which began at the age of nine and reached a high level of intensity during his Harvard College days.

### 1934

Out of a gnawing resentment of the stifling influence of Franco-Russian ballet in America and a genuine desire to implant an American ballet tradition, in 1934 he founded the School of American Ballet. His choice of George Balanchine as its director was a bold and logical one. In one stroke he had acquired a great choreographer and the direct descendant of the Diaghilev-Imperial School, thereby planting the seed of tradition in American soil.

Thus, Kirstein had committed himself to a venture that for all its sterling virtue of purpose did not exempt him the snares and disillusionment of an experiment. He experienced sleepless nights and fretful days throughout the School's period of growing pains.

His dedication to his task produced a laborious work in 1935 entitled *The Book of the Dance*. A painstaking volume devoted to most aspects of dance from the primitive to its present highly complex state. This was unique, being the only work of its kind published in America.

For the next two years Kirstein applied himself to learning the role of impresario. With the launching of his first offsprings, the American Ballet in 1934 and later the Ballet Caravan in 1936, there was not much time for writing. He did, however, find time in the spring of 1937 to contribute an essay, *Crisis in the Dance*, to a periodical called the North American Review. Obviously motivated by a need to clarify his own viewpoint regarding the dance, he challenges the efficacy of the Diaghilev repertoire today, relegating the concert dance to the studio where it is more at home. He was distinctly opposed to symphonic ballets. "As entertainment it is retrogressive, anti-dramatic, finally, non-theatrical."

That was Kirstein fifteen years ago. Since then there is evidence of a change in policy; facts point to the existence of two symphonic ballets in the present repertoire of the New York City Ballet, namely *Symphony in C* (Bizet) and *Symphonie Concertante* (Mozart).

### 1938

But his attitude towards the Russian ballet remains constant. In a pamphlet issued in 1938, *Blast at Ballet* subtitled, *A Corrective for the American Audience*, he lets loose a stream of invective. "Ballet is in a bad time in America today because the blackmail of the Russian organisation, primed by publicity and patronage, still works. The Russian-ballet repertory, itself a vitiated and dying formula, is coasting down-grade on the prestige it has accrued over the last three decades. Its sunset manifestations, in their clouded glory seem more brilliant and familiar to our audiences than the young, crass, naive, but healthy form which marks the beginning of an American classic dance. Our audiences are hired and instructed to aid the charming dotard and starve the yelping child. That is why ballet in America is in a bad time."

### 1939

The travel tales compiled for *Dance Magazine* (Feb., 1939) under the title of *Transcontinental Caravan* reveal a sentimental Kirstein.

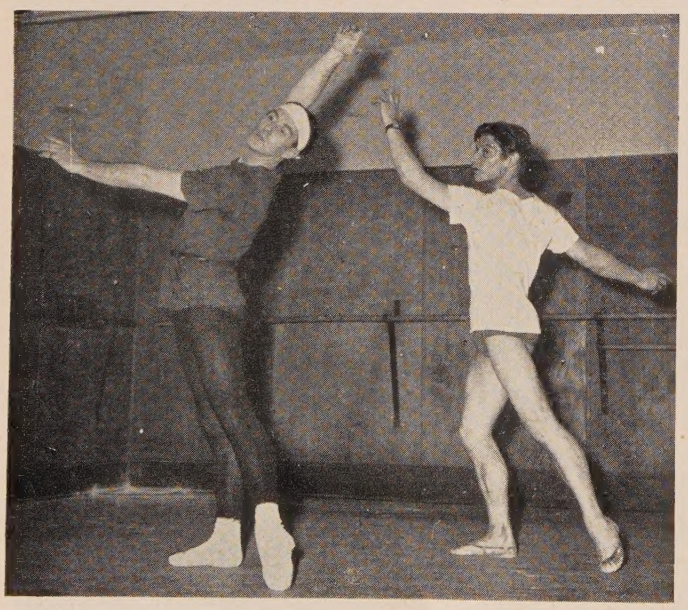
Tortuous routes and tedious time schedules, the fate of all ballet companies touring America, were not spared his Ballet Caravan. For Kirstein as well as most of his young dancers this was a new experience. A hard lesson. Rankled by local authorities in Milwaukee he complained bitterly," This is Eugene Loring's home town. I had wanted to do his two ballets, *Yankee Clipper* and *Billy the Kid* here. But the sponsors refused to permit Billy; they said it was not a fit subject for ballet. . . ." And later in Fresno, California, a kinship for his dancers, bordering on the paternal is revealed: "Todd Bolender hurt his leg quite badly in *Yankee Clipper*, but cheerfully continued dancing while I was alarmed to see tears of pain continually plow through his make up."

In 1939, Kirstein in a capricious mood produced a digest of ballet knowledge called *Ballet Alphabet*. The seventy-two page pamphlet is crammed with definitions, anecdotes and history of the ballet; its subjects alphabetically arranged as in a child's primer. Its beguiling simplicity was no doubt aimed at newcomers to the art.

### 1942

War duty produces a gap until 1942, when Kirstein sponsored the founding of *Dance Index*, a authoritative and scholarly monthly periodical. Its articles testified to the existence of a horde of reliable dance historians in America.

(*continued on page nineteen*



# ANTON DOLIN IN HIS SEARCH FOR A TEACHER

NOW that the irreplaceable services of Madame Vera Volkova have been lost to London, I often ask myself where, in this great ballet-minded city, is there a ballet teacher to whom the experienced and acknowledged professional dancer can go with confidence and security, not only for lessons but to be coached in the many varied and great classical roles.

Admittedly, we have perhaps the finest schools in the world for the ever-growing number of youngsters who, wisely or unwisely, choose the ballet as a career. We have at least two splendid all-round educational schools where the dance is being taught, to my personal knowledge, as efficiently and as well as in any other country. But that the teaching lacks the genius of Vera Volkova is not only my opinion but that of many others who have passed beyond the stage of being merely class-room dancers.

Recently, I sent two leading members of my company for private lessons to a famous dancer of yesterday. The lessons were of undoubted help and I felt that the money they cost me was well spent. As I write this article, both these dancers have made a decision for themselves. During the holiday that looms ahead at the end of a long tour, and before the summer season of ballet at the Royal Festival Hall, they are going to Paris. There to study with one of at least four great ballet teachers who have so much more to impart to the dancer than exercises or *enchainements*. Others talk quite seriously of going to Copenhagen, where they hope Madame Volkova can be persuaded to give them lessons.

I know that there are many fine teachers in London, but there is no denying the fact that the professional dance artist finds it increasingly more difficult to advance his or her art by the ordinary standard set up by the dance teachers we have in this country.

I was in Paris recently for a few days. After many weeks my knee, responding to treatment, felt much stronger. Not only did I need lessons, but what was far more important in my case, I really felt an inward urge to become once again a pupil. Here I had the choice of at least half a dozen teachers, to each one of whom I could not only entrust myself with confidence but from whom I could learn, by whom I could be corrected, knowing that the correction was right.

I've often heard "members of the public" exclaim with amazement, "What, Margot Fonteyn still has lessons! What more can she have to learn?"

How much Madame Vera Volkova taught Fonteyn, not only how to dance, but by coaching her, almost dissecting her great classic roles, Miss Fonteyn would be the first to admit. It was the late Princess Seraphine Astafieva who saw her as a young girl, who predicted even then her great career. She died too soon to have played the same part she did in giving to the English dance its first great prima ballerina, Alicia Markova. After her death—a tragic one for the art of teachers in this country—her faithful deputy and assistant, Verishka, continued to impart for some months Seraphine Astafieva's Russian Ballet methods of dancing to the little Peggy Hookham, as Margot Fonteyn was called then.

No, lessons must never cease for the dancer. They resemble the every-day ritual of the devout churchgoer, whatever his religion may be.

Nearly always, when I have been in Paris, I have had lessons with Madame Lubov Egorova. She is still there, still a great teacher. Some years ago, a series of wonderful private lessons with Alexander Volinine put me into fine shape and fettle for a dance recital I gave at the Salle Pleyel with my pupil, Belita. I had been appearing for many months in Paris in a show at the Mogador Theatre. Dancing the same dances every day, I had become stale. Those few lessons under Volinine's expert tuition, in which he understanding exactly how much the class should cover and how long it should last, spurned the customary forty minutes or one hour routine, helped me enormously.

Both Egorova and Volinine are still passing on their knowledge to the young dancer and, together with the great ballerinas of the early century, Madame Preobrajenska and Mathilde Kchesinska, they are all there for the many famous dancers of today to study and learn much from.

There are yet two other fine professors of the dance to choose from—Madame Nora and Madame Rossane. It was to the latter that I went, together with that young phenomenon, Jean Babilée. I had two wonderful lessons.

How amused I was when mentioning, quite casually, to a friend that I was off to take a lesson, she looked at me in astonishment, saying, "But I don't understand, you taking lessons! Don't you know all the steps yet?" I could have answered, "Yes, I know all the steps, but I still have to go on learning them." I doubt though if *she* would have understood.

(*continued on page* 25

*Three photographs, by Serge Lido, of Anton Dolin with Jean Babilée taking class with Madame Rossane who is seen in the centre picture*

# Hugh Stevenson

by CLIVE BARNES

## Design for ballet 4

AFTER a time it becomes almost tedious to list all the dancers, choreographers and designers who started their careers at the Mercury Theatre under the aegis of Marie Rambert. For the sake of variety the despairing writer, fearful of repetition, begins to wish that a few more of the important artists concerned with British ballet had made a start outside the pervasive influence of Mercury.

It would be entertaining to report, for instance, that Hugh Stevenson had made his debut as a designer with the decor for a production of *Gammer Gurton's Needle* in the Belgian Congo, but he did not. Like so many of his contemporaries, like Fedorovitch, Nadia Benois, William Chappell and Ronald Wilson, Stevenson also started with Rambert. His first production was in 1932, when he designed Sara Patrick's ballet, *Unbowed*.

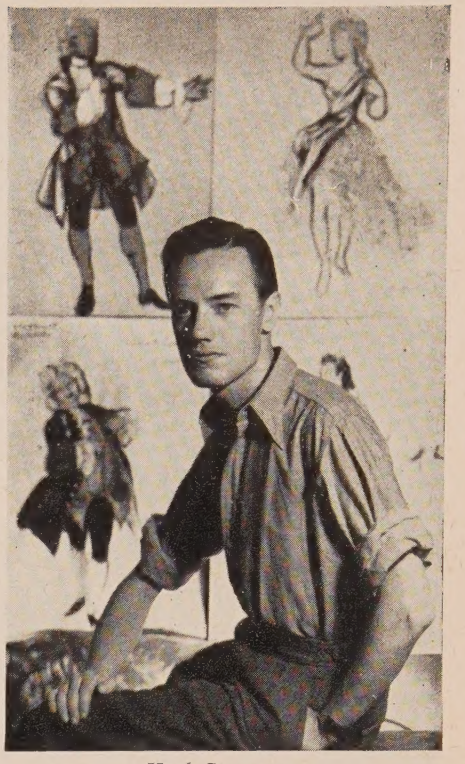
Two years later he was responsible for the decor and costumes of *The Planets*. This was the beginning of a collaboration with Antony Tudor which, although far shorter, can be compared with the partnership of Fedorovitch and Ashton. Many of Tudor's finest works were in conjunction with Stevenson, including *The Planets*, *Jardin aux Lilas*, *Soirée Musicale* and *Gala Performance*. He has also designed ballets for de Valois (*The Gods go a'Begging* and *Promenade*) and Andrée Howard (*The Fugitive* and *Mardi Gras*). In recent years he has designed *Giselle* for Festival Ballet (he is also responsible for the Rambert *Giselle*), David Lichine's *Symphonic Impressions* and John Cranko's *Pastorale*, and Peter Darrell's *Farewell*.

The role taken by a designer in the making of a ballet varies considerably. Sometimes, and too often, he is called in with much the same spirit as we might summon an interior decorator. Occasionally, as often was Alexandre Benois, he is the prime-mover in the ballet's creation.

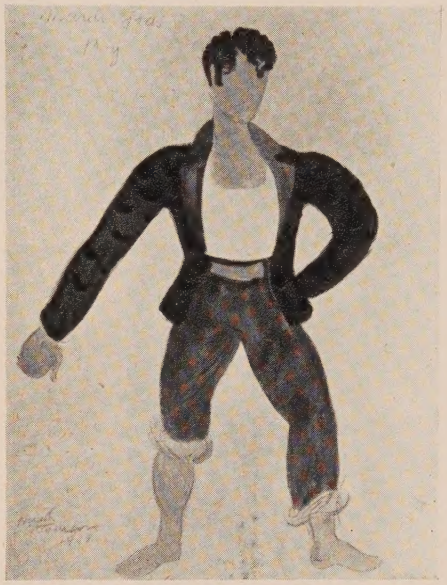
It would be stretching a point to dub Stevenson another Benois, but certainly he has contributed much more than the designs to many of the ballets in which he has had a hand. He apparently provided the initial impetus to both *The Planets* and *Jardin aux Lilas*. The scenarios of *The Fugitive* and *Mardi Gras* are also accredited to him. In these ballets the conception and treatment are his, and one can understand his importance by realising that *Jardin aux Lilas* is as much *his* ballet as *Petrouchka* is Benois'.

His decors are nearly all remarkable for their power of evoking the ballet's intentions. In *Jardin aux Lilas* his set, with its heady purple patches of lilac, adds enormously to the effect of the ballet. In *Gala Performance* his summing-up of a late nineteenth century theatre is, in its way, just as masterly, while in *The Gods go a'Begging* he has provided a setting admirably suited to the Watteau-like picture of a Fête-Champêtre. In fact so sensitive is he to atmosphere and mood that when he attempted the decor for a plotless ballet (*Symphonic Impressions*) having nothing definite to express he failed almost completely.

One of the aims of a designer must be to provide as much space for dancing as possible. The easy way to do this is to restrict oneself to a back-cloth and wings, but the result tends to be uninteresting. Stevenson in a number of his designs has shown considerable skill in the construction of solid sets. His decor for *The Fugitive* utilises the cut-away section of a house to represent the garden into which the fugitive first flees, and later the room where he is finally discovered.



*Hugh Stevenson*
*Photo: Pamela Booth*



Above: *Costume for the Boy in Andrée Howard's* Mardi Gras. *Photo: A. C. Cooper*

Left: *Hugh Laing, Peggy van Praagh, Antony Tudor and Maude Lloyd in Tudor's* Jardin aux Lilas. *This was one of Stevenson's earliest designs for ballet*

Finally mention must be made of his designs for the ballet *Giselle*. One good decor would be sufficiently remarkable but Stevenson can be credited with two of the three best designs for this ballet seen in recent years. These are possibly not so significant on a final reckoning as his notable work in modern ballet. But his success in this field takes on an unexpected importance, when one considers the misconceived, badly executed, ill-judged decorations that so often pass in this country as designs suitable for nineteenth century classics.

In a classical revival the original music is used and an attempt is made to reproduce something of the original production and choreography. It follows therefore that the designer will not be doing his job unless he too attempts to give at least a modernised impression of the period. Give unto nineteenth century ballet that which belongs to nineteenth century ballet and your first step will be in the right direction. Yet we still have Eugene Berman's *Giselle*, Leslie Hurry's *Swan Lake* and William Chappell's and Loudon Sainthill's productions of *Coppelia*—all decors which, individual merits apart, are as tastelessly anachronistic as Regency clothes in *Hamlet*.

In both his designs for *Giselle*, Stevenson, like James Bailey in the Wells production and Bérard in *La Sylphide*, has re-created the romantic ballet so that the work can be seen in its correct context. If he, or even someone else, could do the same for the other classics in the standard repertory it would be no less than an act of profound mercy.

The instinctive feeling for appropriate style which has brought success to his *Giselles* is the quality apparent in all his best work. In Stevenson British ballet has a designer who understands the special demands of ballet as well as any and contributes an original and active mind to the creative team of ballet production.

# Summer Visitors 2

## FESTIVAL BALLET

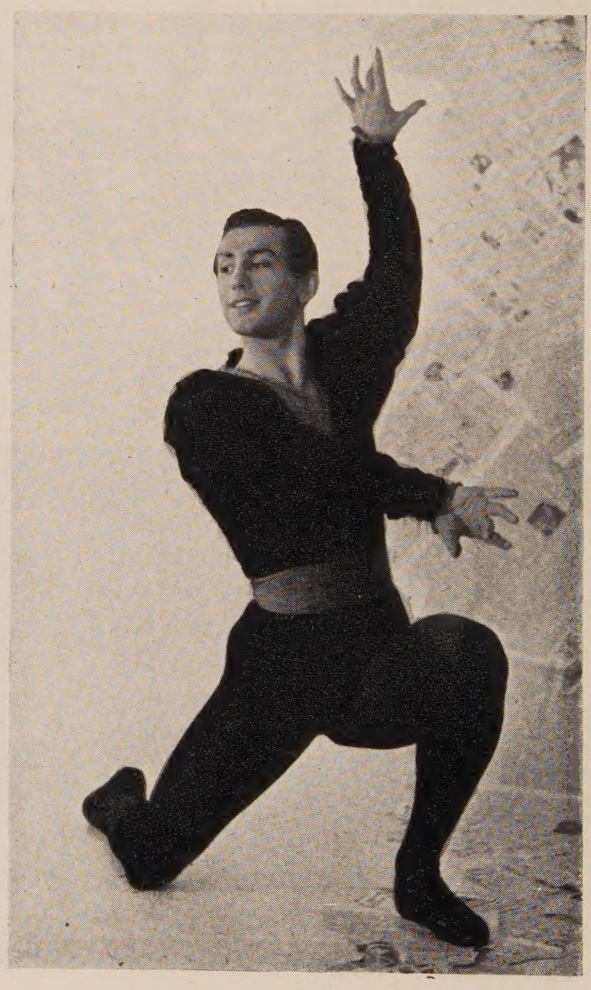
### The Principal Dancers

**The company of which Anton Dolin is Artistic Director is appearing at The Royal Festival Hall, London, for seven weeks from July 31.**

**For this concert hall season, the stage has been entirely reconstructed with a proper proscenium and curtain. Some of the scenery will be projected on to a cyclorama of glass cloth. This may lead the way to an entirely new approach to concert hall performance of ballet.**

*Anton Dolin in the title role in* Petrouchka. *He is both principal male dancer and Artistic Director of the company*
*Photo: Lido*

*Sonia Arova and Oleg Briansky in* Le Lac des Cygnes *Act I. Arova has also appeared in this country with Ballet Rambert, Metropolitan Ballet, Les Ballets des Champs-Elysées, and Original Ballet Russe*
*Photo: Paul Wilson*



Right: *Oleg Briansky in the variation from the* Don Quixote pas de deux. *It was in this that he first had such an outstanding success with Festival Ballet. He has appeared previously in England with Les Ballets des Champs-Elysées and Ballets de Paris*
*Photo: Roy Round*

*Belinda Wright and John Gilpin in the* Harlequinade pas de deux. *Wright started with Ballet Rambert then joined Ballets de Paris. She returned to England in* 1951 *and joined Festival Ballet as one of its ballerinas*

*John Gilpin also started with Ballet Rambert, later going to Ballets de Paris and the Marquis de Cuevas company. He has been one of the principal male dancers with Festival Ballet since it started*

*Photo: Paul Wilson*

*Nathalie Leslie and John Gilpin in the* Black Swan pas de deux. *Leslie (previously known as Natalie Krassovska) was with Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo before the war. Rising to become a ballerina she remained with that company until she joined Festival Ballet. She has been a prima ballerina with the company since its outset* *Photo: Paul Wilson*

*Nathalie Leslie as Giselle, John Gilpin as Albrecht and Sonia Arova as Myrthe in the last act of* Giselle. *Photo: Paul Wilson*

# Sylvia, at last!

THIS summer, for what I believe is the third time, we find ourselves back again with the ballet which, because its production at Covent Garden has been so often mooted and then postponed, I have begun to think of as on-again-off-again-*Sylvia*.

I suppose that there are many reasons why *Sylvia* has occasioned so many changes of mind among the Royal Opera House authorities. It is not one of those ballets that you cook up and serve with the social sauce piquante which seems nowadays to cover such a multitude of artistic sins. It is a complete work of art in its own right.

Nor will it be as easy as the re-creation of so many other ballets. The nymphs and satyrs of nineteenth-century romanticism do not easily come to life today. But if they do, a great deal of the credit will have to go to the music of Delibes.

Alexandre Benois once wrote "Music takes the predominant role in ballet, but this music only fulfils its basic function when it contains the power of persuasion, something spell-binding that compels us to believe in the most improbable occurrences. For this reason Delibes, Tchaikovsky and Stravinsky must all be ranked as first-rate composers of ballet music, inasmuch as their work quite apart from any musical merits, possesses the power of persuasion, inducing us to accept unquestioningly all that we are seeing and hearing."

Leo Delibes had that quality of suggesting in music perhaps more than any other composer of his time. His music had little to do with the subject matter of his ballets. It was good French theatre-music of the late nineteenth-century, and nothing more. It did not attempt to adapt itself to its subject at all; rather did it do the opposite: it captured its audiences so much that they came to associate it indelibly with the action on the stage.

As examples in the Delibes work we know well, there are such apparently national dances as the mazurka and czardas in *Coppelia*. While they are being danced, one is completely taken in by what appear to be perfectly natural Polish and Hungarian dances which, on examination, turn out to be nothing of the kind apart from tempo. In actual fact both are, musically speaking, as French as the *Marseillaise*.

Parts of the score of *Sylvia* will come to today's audiences as old friends: the *pizzicati* variations, the preludes and entr'actes, the *Cortège de Bacchus*, the famous Waltz, and the music of the Huntresses—all are things that we have whistled for years without attaching any particular meaning to them. But once we have seen the ballet, these melodies will become associated in our minds with the action and, for many of us, performances will be rather like those nights of Gilbert and Sullivan operas when the audience can be heard prompting the performers!

# Concert ballet music

BALLET music is becoming popular, not only on records, but also in the concert hall, and some odd things happen at times when music intended for the theatre is taken out of it.

One of the best programmes of this type was played a little while ago at the Royal Festival Hall by the London Symphony Orchestra under George Weldon, a performance which contained many lessons for lovers of ballet.

Perhaps the most important of these was the "putting in its place" of the Sullivan music for *Pineapple Poll*. These melodies, so completely associated for years with the incidents in the operas from which they were taken, were just as thoroughly in place in the ballet, for they matched the situations on the stage perfectly. But in a concert hall there are no associations at all.

For me, this music was quite meaningless in concert performance. It was well played, more competently than excitingly, but somehow I found myself gazing at the ceiling more than I should have.

Not so with the music of *La Boutique Fantasque*. This is a perfect example of something I wrote in this column some time ago, about correct performance of music which is not always given properly in the theatre. Respighi, one of the great masters of orchestral writing, orchestrated these Rossini fragments for a large combination of players, much larger than that which we now hear in theatres. It is a much fuller and richer piece of sound than we ever have for a performance of the ballet, and this performance showed us what we usually miss. It had, as well as excitement, a musical value of its own.

## *Music*

## by EVAN SENIOR

One thing this concert proved for me is that the *Prélude à l'Aprés Midi d'un Faune*—and, for that matter, any Debussy music—should never be played in the Royal Festival Hall. The knife-sharp clarity of the hall's acoustics ruined the whole effect of the music, which had the same effect as if the stark outlining of a Rouault style had been added to the dreamy haze that lies over a Manet impression.

Not so with the magnificent performance of *The Firebird* suite. Here, the large orchestra, able to cope with the magnificent Stravinsky scoring, outlined every thread of the texture of this rich and glowing music—music which can stand on its own as art in sound quite apart from the ballet.

## *New Records*

### The Beauty on L.P.

*The Sleeping Princess* (Tchaikovsky) Suite; *Caucasian Sketches* (Ippolitov-Ivanov): Orchestre de la Société des Concerts du Conservatoire de Paris, cond. Roger Désormière. Decca, LXT 2610. 1 12-in., 39*s*. 6*d*.

WITH all the advantages of long-playing, one would have thought that the music of *The Sleeping Princess*, or *The Sleeping Beauty* or whatever one chooses to call it, could have been recorded more or less in full.

However, with so much to be thankful for, let us not quibble. Here, on one side of the disc, is a suite that gives us part of the opening scene and the Lilac Fairy's theme, which runs throughout the ballet; the Rose Adagio; the Puss-in-Boots and White Cat divertissement from the final act; the beautiful Panorama of the Transformation Scene; and the second act Waltz.

I could think of better bits and pieces to tie up with the Rose Adagio and the Panorama (haven't these others been recorded almost *ad nauseam?*). But the two main pieces are well worth while, and beautifully done with that punctiliousness plus imagination which Roger Désormière knows so well how to bring out, with a quiet but firm touch which we shall miss so much if this great conductor's recent accident in Paris keeps him away from music for some time. Once more the music has a stereoscopic quality on these records, as if one had one's ear near the orchestra.

On the reverse is a splendid performance of the whole four of the *Caucasian Sketches*, which, as far as I know, have nothing to do with ballet. But I should not be surprised to hear that somebody had attached a ballet to at least one if not all of them—and choreographers might well do worse and often have.

This disc brings *In a Mountain Pass*, *In the Village*, *In the Mosque*, and the *Procession of the Sirdar*. The first and last have been played almost to death, until Désormière injects into them that musicality which makes them live again and which reinforces my often expressed opinion that there is no such thing as hackneyed music but only hackneyed performances of it. The *Village* and the *Mosque* are delightful little pieces which deserve to be heard more often.

### —and the Lake

*Le Lac des Cygnes* (*Swan Lake*) (Tchaikovsky): London Symphony Orchestra, cond. Anatole Fistoulari. Decca Long-Playing LXT-2681-2. 2 12-in., 39*s*. 6*d*. each.

AT last they are coming, these full performances of ballet scores on the subject of which I wrote some months ago. This, for me at any rate, is the first, and a splendid first it is. You may think a matter of practically four pounds is a lot of money: so it is, but then it is also a lot of music. The complete two-hour performance is well worth it.

The score of *Swan Lake* is a difficult thing to talk about. First we must make sure of what we mean. Many things have happened to it between its first performance and now—in fact, a great deal happened between its first performance and its second, if it comes to the point; and it is not possible to decide just what to accept as the "full" score.

Tchaikovsky himself revised it on more than one occasion, adding and cutting; Drigo provided the bits that, today, pad out what we call the *Black Swan pas-de-deux* to make it more worth while as a show-piece for the ballerina, and the Dance of the Prince from earlier in the third act was sandwiched into this to add to the choreographic brilliance and destroy the dramatic integrity of the whole act.

What we have in this performance is practically the whole score, entr'actes and preludes and all. Some small pieces have been put into their correct order and correct scoring. It is as near to the complete thing as we shall ever get.

Fistoulari impresses me as the ideal ballet conductor—at least for recorded performances, where there are no dancers to interfere. They are not necessary in this performance: it dances of itself. The conductor has a splendid orchestra literally at his finger-tips, and plays on it just as a great artist plays on a sensitive instrument, with complete insight into the music, and with a delicacy and dramatic intensity which have been almost miraculously captured by the recording.

In addition to all this, that warm and romantic artist Campoli has been brought in to play the ravishing solos in the second and third acts, with Willem de Mont as solo 'cellist.

You cannot think of this performance as isolated sections. When you listen to it as music, away from the theatre, you will see clearly what a magnificent musical whole it is, a logical development from beginning to end which, in spite of its glittering digressions, never once loses sight of its ultimate goal or of its means of getting there.

And above all, it is ballet music of a quality that stirs the emotions and the heart. You could not wish for better ballet music, or for a better performance of it.

# THE MARQUIS DE CUEVAS GRAND BALLET

**Three recent works given by the company which will appear at the Edinburgh Festival from September 1st to 6th**

*Ana Ricarda as the Infanta in her own ballet* Inez de Castro. *The costumes and decor are by Celia Hubbard; the music by Joachim Serra. Ricarda is seen with a Counsellor (Vladimir Skouratoff)* *Photo: Lido*

*Rosella Hightower in the title role of* Inez de Castro, *with George Skibine as Don Pedro* *Photo: Lido*

*Serge Golovine and Dolores Starr in the new work by John Taras* Cordelia. *The decor and costumes are by Dupont and the music by Sauguet* *Photo: Lido*

*Rosella Hightower and Vladimir Skouratoff in Aurel Miloss'* Coup de Feu. *The decor and costumes are by Cassandre and the music by Georges Auric* *Photo: Lido*

*Peter Wright who gave such a remarkably powerful performance of the Young Man intent on disposing of the old one*
*Photo: Paul Wilson*

# THE TELL-TALE HEART

**First given by Ballet Workshop at the Mercury Theatre on Sunday, June 8, 1952.**

**An adaptation from a story by Edgar Allan Poe; Music by Michael Hobson; Decor and Costumes, Kenneth Aadams; Production, Peter Darrell.**

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *The Young Man* . . . . | spoken by | Derek Prowse |
| | danced by | Peter Wright |
| *The Old Man* . . . . . | | Iain Gordon |
| *Police Officers* . . . . . | | Michel de Latre and Ronald Yerrell |

THE programme credits do not call this a ballet, nor Peter Darrell its choreographer. It is described as an adaptation produced by Darrell; a just appraisal of an interesting choreographic experiment.

Poe's story *The Tell-Tale Heart* relates in a curious personal manner the history of a lunatic murderer who, "how healthily—how calmly", stealthily whispers the whole strange narrative into the ear of the reader. A young man, deranged by disease, sets out with the child-like logic of the mad to kill a blameless old man. "Object there was none. Passion there was none. I loved the old man. He had never wronged me. He had never given me insult. For his gold I had no desire. I think it was his eye! yes it was this! One of his eyes resembled a vulture—a pale blue eye, with a film over it. Whenever it fell upon me, my blood ran cold; and so by degrees—very gradually—I made up my mind to take the life of the old man, and thus rid myself of the eye for ever."

Cautiously, elaborately he achieves his purpose. He kills his victim and, having dismembered the body, buries it beneath the floor-boards. Two police officers, made suspicious by the old man's death-cry, enter and search the murderer's lodgings, but find nothing. He, feeling secure, invites them to stay and talk with him. Slowly his nerves splinter and break, he imagines—or was it not imagination?—that he hears the beat of the old man's heart, louder and louder until, unable to bear it any longer, he screams out his confession.

In this production the story, only slightly abridged, is read out over a loudspeaker while it is mimed and danced on the stage. Darrell employs naturalistic gesture to advance the action. The Young Man's role is realised chiefly in terms of classical dancing which not only differentiates him from the other characters but also gives a physical form to his mental derangement.

Some of the work is extremely realistic, the dismemberment of the corpse being a case in point, but in this, however much the purists may be shocked, Darrell could claim he followed the style of the original.

The success of the experiment rested on the question whether or not Darrell was able to add anything to Poe's story. Did this production have any effect over and above that which could have been created by the narration of the story in a darkened room? I fancy the answer is no.

Michael Hobson's music, competent and atmospheric, underlined the action in the unobtrusive omniscient manner of good film music. Its relationship with the dancing was somewhat strained. Kenneth Aadams' decor, fine in conception (a room cut-away to show the passage behind) was a little less good in execution. The stylised romantic costume for the Young Man was excellent.

*The Young Man is repulsed by the filmy pale blue eye of the Old Man (Iain Gordon)*
*Photo: Paul Wilson*

The work was well performed, Peter Wright having a considerable personal success in his portrayal of the Young Man. That this dancer could appear so comparatively ineffectual at Sadler's Wells with his parent company, and then produce a characterisation as full of macabre power as this seems most remarkable. One if forced to wonder whether he has not been largely miscast. Possibly the Ballets Jooss, the company he is about to re-join, will foster his talent for dramatic dancing. Darrell was well supported by all his collaborators, including Derek Prowse whose reading of the story it would be difficult to better.

Where the experiment failed was in its false assumption that completeness is not an absolute, and that to add to something already whole will, in some way, make it better. To comment on an existing work of art, as Ashton did in *Illuminations*, is a valid aim; to supplement it by expansion, not even by illustration, is the mere courting of disaster.

But had it been possible for Darrell to succeed one doubts whether his choreography had enough distinction to attract much more than passing interest. The gestures were well-produced but the classical content of the choreography surely required some degree of submission to its theme. In *Undertow* Tudor put classical technique to a purpose no less singular than Darrell's, but he transmuted his raw material in a way that Darrell did not. The vocabulary of the *danse d'école* needs a personal accent before it is suitable for the utterance of dramatic ballet.

Although I feel personally unable to commend the result of this worthwhile experiment, it does show a development in theatrical presentation on Darrell's previous ballets.

**Clive Barnes**

*The Young Man finally confesses his guilt to the Police Officers (Ronald Yerrell and Michel de Latre)* *Photo: Paul Wilson*

# MOVIMIENTOS

**First given by Ballet Workshop at the Mercury Theatre on Sunday, June 8, 1952.**
**Choreography, Michael Charnley; Music, Michael Hobson; Decor and costumes, Tom Lingwood.**

Maria Sanina and Michael Charnley
Josephine Gordon and Terry Gilbert
Sheila O'Neill and Nachum Yehuda

WHY is it that some steps, some fragments of dance, coalesce into choreography? By what alchemy is a ballet made? Looking at a ballet and working backwards from effect to cause we can occasionally get some inkling of its creation. We can descry isolated beauties, by themselves as meaningless as a brush-stroke on a canvas; we can talk about choreographic flow and brilliant invention; we can pepper our deliberations with code-words like "style", "grace", "feeling" and "humour"; but we are unable to say with any degree of definiteness just what it is that makes a ballet click. Michael Charnley's new ballet *Movimientos* clicks; this is not a work of promise, this is an achievement.

The ballet opens with five people crouching on a dimly-lit stage, one in each corner, one in the middle. One after another each of them is caught in a spot-light and dances a snatch of brightly coloured movement. The episodic opening broadens out into a group dance, from then on the ballet proceeds with abandon, sensuous and spontaneous. The group breaks first into a short solo for the central girl, later into *pas de deux*, *pas de trois* and more *soli*.

Moods change—a boy flirts with a girl, another plays with a bird-cage, two lovers embrace, a girl whirls round the stage for the hell and joy of it. They all dance like real people, here there are none of your lifeless dolls strutting on the strings of a painstaking puppeteer. The whole ballet vibrates with dancing. It is a work in many ways worthy of comparison with Jerome Robbins' *Interplay*.

Charnley's vocabulary is terse and succinct. Spins, out-stretched arms, flexed knees, extended legs, curved insteps, sweeping lifts. Not really an extension of classical dancing but a slightly modified limitation. Perhaps Charnley's laconic statement and economy of flourish could become monotonous, but in this, at least, it seems completely sufficient.

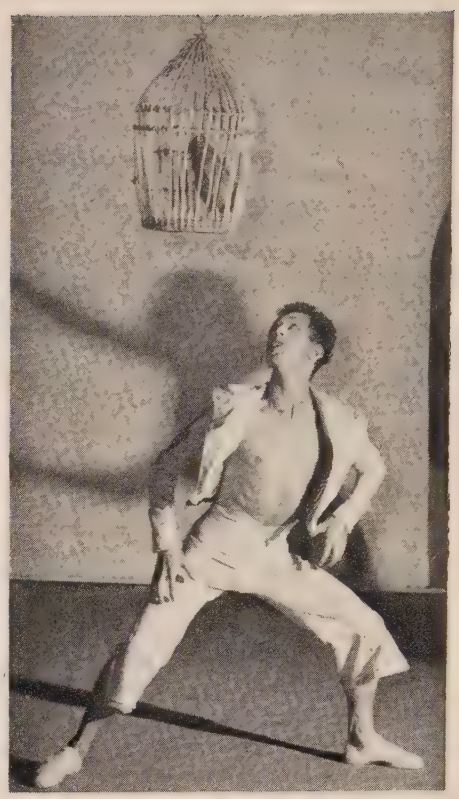
Michael Hobson's score, tuneful and easy to listen to, has a marked Spanish flavour which is hinted at in the choreography. This Spanish note has appeared before in Charnley's work. Tom Lingwood's decor and costumes are also in keeping with the ballet's Southern mood. A simple colourful conception, possibly a little too much in the recognised style for the commercial intimate revue, but giving place and space for the brilliantly exciting dances.

The dancers work as a unit, in a sympathy with one another that it is rare to find in a ballet company let alone in a scratch group got together for a particular performance. They are lively dancers charged with zest.

Michael Charnley is the first important choreographer to be discovered by the Workshop (Jack Carter and Michael Holmes had small reputations before the organisation's first performance). By *No Lips of Comfort*, *Bagatelle* and now *Movimientos*, Charnley has established himself as a potential leader of British ballet. He must be allowed to mount a work for a full-scale company. Carter, Charnley and Holmes are ready to take their places in British choreography. Where is the company willing to take the risk of employing them?

All readers interested in the present and future tense of the verb "to dance", are urged to see *Movimientos*. If Ballet Workshop had done nothing else, and it has done much, this ballet would have triumphantly justified its existence.

**Clive Barnes**



*Michael Charnley in a dance with a bird cage. It is interesting to note that both Anton Dolin and Julian Braunsweg saw this work at the Mercury theatre; as a result they have commissioned him to create a new ballet for their Festival Ballet season at Festival Hall. This will be to Don Gillis'* Symphony for Fun. *The premiere is scheduled for September*

*Photo: Paul Wilson*

**Next month, New Ballets will contain photographs of the *Rake's Progress* as given by the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet. Also many photographs of New York City Ballet, now at Covent Garden.**

Right: *Sheila O'Neill and Nachum Yehuda in a* pas de deux *with a scarf*

Below: *Terry Gilbert and Josephine Gordon in another* pas de deux *from the same work. All the costumes of Tom Lingwood were simple and in interesting bright, clear, colours*

*Photos: Paul Wilson*

# curtain up!

**Compiled by Jeffrey Solomons**

### *Parisian scandal*

NEW YORK CITY BALLET was greeted in Paris with the type of scandal, more or less traditional in the French capital. In a letter addressed to the seven Presidents of the Festival of Works of the Twentieth Century, Serge Lifar severely criticised the choice of companies engaged. He suggested that the ballets chosen were not representative, and he complained also of the non-participation of the ballet of the Paris Opéra.

On the other hand, Nicholas Nabokov, President of the Committee organising the Festival, declared to the press that when he invited the Paris Opéra company to perform, Monsieur Lehmann, the director of the Opera, declined his offer on the grounds that it did not fit in with the Opéra schedules. He said too that the company would not be able to do justice with so short a time for preparation, to the two creations demanded for the Festival. Despite all this behind-the-scenes argument, the company had a great success. In particular, Jerome Robbins' *The Cage* seems to have created quite a stir. Margot Fonteyn saw the ballet and said, "It is extraordinary; I did not sleep the night on which I saw it!"

*DANCERS AT ANTIQUE DEALER'S FAIR*

*A Chelsea Porcelain group, entitled* The Dancing Figures, *from the Massey-Mainwaring Collection. They are about 7¼ inches high. Dated about* 1753 *with the very rare Red Anchor mark*

*The girl in a sprigged white bodice with blue bows and a pink skirt with a gold fringed hem. The apron is white*

*The man is in a turquoise coat, white shirt and black breeches. His hat is turned up with a spray of flowers*

*The tree-stump between them is encrusted with flowers*

*Margot Fonteyn and Lycette Darsonval (star of the Paris Opera) in* Les Sylphides *during the gala at the Palais de Chaillot*

*Fonteyn flew over to Paris with Michael Somes to appear at this performance which Darsonval organised to help preserve the Palace of Fontainebleau. Fonteyn also danced the* pas de deux *from the last act of Ashton's* Cinderella *with Michael Somes. This had been re-arranged by Ashton so that it could be given separately from the ballet*

*It is encouraging to think that ballerinas can give their services to a cause so worthy as restoring national monuments*

*Photo: Lido*

### *Three wonderful days*

MARGOT FONTEYN was appearing at that time at a Gala at the Palais de Chaillot. This was organised by Lycette Darsonval of the Paris Opèra in aid of the fund for the preservation of the palace at Fontainebleau, which is falling into a state of disrepair. Of her stay Margot Fonteyn said, "Three days in Paris, three days of work, but despite that, they were wonderful. I stayed for Roland Petit who is going to create a new ballet for me in London. I should like a dramatic role, another *Demoiselles de la Nuit*.

### *The black bottom again*

ROLAND PETIT has just finished the Hans Anderson film in Hollywood. His Parisian tights showed up too sheer for the all seeing camera. He saw rushes of the day's shooting and yelled, "Mon Dieu, my bottom, it shows through!"

So every morning his seat was blacked by a film make-up man. "To darken my derriere," grinned Petit.

### *Dramatic English dancer*

MUCH interest will be aroused when the Ballets Jooss return to England next February. This company, has a style and technique quite different from those of our native companies. Their anti-war ballet, *The Green Table*, will seem equally appropriate now. With them will be Peter Wright who has until recently been a member of the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet. His forceful and dramatic personality, and his ability to probe beneath the skin of a role, will doubtlessly find more outlet with this company than it did in the divertissements and light comedies of the Theatre Ballet.

### *A new magazine*

ON page four is an announcement of our new companion magazine *Music and Musicians*, the first number of which will be published on August 20. The editor, Evan Senior, has been music critic for us since our first number. Starting in our September number we have asked a series of guest critics to write about ballet music and new records each month in place of Mr. Senior who will in future write only in *Music and Musicians*.

### *Let there be light*

COVENT GARDEN has recently been giving programme credits to those all-important people who light their ballets. These artists have for far too long been neglected; their contribution can very easily make or mar a ballet. Some of the revivals staged by other companies have completely lacked atmosphere because of too high or unsubtle lighting. On the other hand, the revised lighting for *Giselle* at Covent Garden is convincing, and does much to enhance the charm of the setting as well as adding logicality to the ballet.

The gaseous yellows and sombre shadows of the recent revival of *The Rake's Progress* at Sadler's Wells are the excellent work of Michael Manuel, Stage Manager to the parent company at the Opera House. Twenty-four year old Michael Manuel's life has been inextricably connected with Covent Garden; his family owns one of the large fruit and vegetable concerns in the market. After his National Service he became Assistant Stage Manager to the Opera at Covent Garden. Then came a period of study at the Paris Opera. In May, 1950, he joined the Sadler's Wells Ballet for their second tour of North America and has this year become their Stage Manager.

### *Hunting in the vintage*

TALKING of programmes reminds me that the programme for Sadler's Wells *Giselle* remains quite inept. The *corps-de-ballet* in the First Act are referred to collectively as "huntsmen" (perhaps strayed in from the neighbouring Swan Lake), despite the fact that they hunt nothing more voracious than the grape vine. It is wrong too to combine the Duke's Hunting Party with the peasants. The *pas-de-six* are referred to as "children". Why then have it danced by some of the oldest ladies of the company?

### *A Polite theatre*

THE courtesy and consideration shown by the management and staff of the Cambridge Theatre are, unfortunately, to be denied us. The lessees of the Theatre have seen fit to dismiss the staff and end the connection with Peter Daubeny. In few other theatres were we treated to such good taste and efficiency of production combined with that atmosphere which only the front-of-house staff can produce. Their politeness, manners and general desire to give pleasure were an example to all other theatres.

### *Alfresco portraits*

WALKING through the open-air exhibition of paintings in the Victoria Embankment Gardens, my attention was suddenly held by two extraordinarily life-like portraits of Sadler's Wells dancers. These were the work of Kingsley McKee whose daughter, Fiorella Keane, is a notable member of the *corps-de-ballet*. One of the paintings, of Fiorella herself, has crystallised her own style of movement in a vivid manner. Mr. KcKee is now exhibiting in The Walk at Hampstead where his portraits include those of Nadia Nerina and Wendy Winn. He is at present at work on a study of Violetta Elvin.

### *Welcome ! Skibine twins*

MANY congratulations to George and Marjorie Skibine of the De Cuevas company. Marjorie gave birth to twin boys on July 3.

Skibine writes: "It happened last night. Marjorie gave birth to twin boys. Alexander T. Skibine arrived at 6.10 in the morning; George T. Skibine arrived at 6.15 on the same day. Alexander is named after Marjorie's father, George after me. The T stands for Marjorie's grandfather who was plainly called Tall Chief because he was tall and a chief. Marjorie is fine and happy, the boys also."

It is doubtful whether Marjorie will be dancing again with the company until they are in Cannes in February 1953.

*George Zoritch of the Marquis de Cuevas company. This photograph was taken during the company's recent visit to Rio*

*The company danced at the Municipal Theatre and had a great success. It seems that if the audience likes you they make life wonderful for you. If they don't, you might find a dead black rooster with half a bottle of cachiassa* (132 *proof alcohol*) *and a candle burning at the door of the dressing room. All supposedly to make you fall from* tour en l'air, *miss your* pirouettes, *or drop your partner*

*The company did not rate any black roosters although some of them rather hoped for a bottle of cachiassa*

*Tamara Toumanova as Anna Pavlova in* Autumn Leaves *from the film* To-night we Sing *She is partnered by Serge Perrault*

*Photo: Twentieth Century Fox*

## *happy birthday to...*

| | | Aug. |
|---|---|---|
| Alfred Rodrigues | Sadler's Wells Ballet | 15 |
| Anne Rowse | Festival Ballet | 18 |
| Roy Tobias | New York City Ballet | 22 |
| Barbara Bocher | New York City Ballet | 26 |
| Angela Sparshott | Rambert Ballet | 27 |
| Moira Tucker | formerly Empire Ballet | 29 |
| Danielle Darmance | formerly Champs Elysees Ballet | 31 |
| | | Sept. |
| Seamus Gordon | "Kiss me Kate" | 2 |
| Yvonne Mounsey | New York City Ballet | 2 |
| Roy Walker | Continental Ballet | 2 |
| Ruth Sobotka | New York City Ballet | 4 |
| Errol Addison | International Ballet | 8 |
| Mary Drage | Sadler's Wells Ballet | 10 |
| Vassilie Trunoff | Festival Ballet | 14 |
| Janet Reed | New York City Ballet | 15 |
| Peter Darrell | Festival Ballet | 16 |
| Frederick Ashton | Sadler's Wells Ballet | 17 |
| David Poole | Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet | 17 |
| Geoffrey Davidson | Festival Ballet | 18 |

**Readers with birthday cards for dancers can address them c/o DANCE AND DANCERS, 12 Phipps Mews, Eccleston Place, London, S.W.1. Letters will be forwarded to the dancer's home address to arrive on the birthday. Please post early.**

*This and the drawing on the opposite page are from the sketch book of Peter Aposporos who was in the studio during the shooting*

# Filming ballet in three dimensions

**The three-dimensional film, *Black Swan*, opens up new possibilities in filming ballet. In this article, the complications and possibilities are discussed in the light of what was learnt from the first stereoscopic ballet experiment.**

*BLACK SWAN* is doubly an experimental film. It is an experiment in filming ballet and an experiment in a new kind of film-making. To the mixture of science and art which takes place in studio, cutting room and laboratory have been added the new techniques and calculations necessary to produce a third dimension on the screen.

Generally speaking, there are two kinds of stereo-cinema in use today. In a special cinema in Moscow stereo films have been shown since before the war. The projection apparatus is *behind* the screen, projecting the images through the screen and through a series of grids to produce the three-dimensional effect. No glasses are needed but the film can only be viewed by a relatively small number of people sitting directly in front of the screen or a few degrees on either side. Commercially this has serious disadvantages.

We do not yet know the details of Sir Alexander Korda's system but stereo-cinema in Britain (more advanced in the medium than any other country outside the Soviet Union), at present requires the use of glasses, a screen with a highly reflecting surface (say aluminium) and two projectors coupled and synchronised, the projectors being placed *in front* of the screen. At the moment the best cinemas are those seating up to about 500 people, but the system will improve and it can be seen that the special equipment needed is much less elaborate than in the U.S.S.R. The films we are making have been and will be shown in existing cinemas in many parts of Britain, the Commonwealth, Europe and America.

Without going into technical details the stereo-camera we use now comprises two ordinary cameras placed side by side, their lenses the width apart of human eyes. They are coupled together and thus record identical objects on two separate films, each from a slightly different angle. When the films are projected, two projectors are used coupled and synchronised to move at the same speed. Consequently two images are projected on to the screen and these images are merged, becoming one three-dimensional image to the viewer by the wearing of polarised glasses. This explanation leaves out the mathematical calculations and laboratory work which take place before, during and after the film is made, but it is enough to show what goes on.

*Black Swan* seems to me to prove that ballet comes across on the screen infinitely better in three dimensions than it does when filmed in the ordinary way. Even in a film as successful (filmically) as *Red Shoes* much of the excitement of ballet is lost because the third dimension is missing.

When I began to work on the choreoscript at the beginning of this year I was not only limited in time to about ten minutes (*Black Swan* runs for nearly twelve) but I was unwilling to experiment in screen choreography until we knew more about the new film technique itself. Therefore it seemed permissible to choose a dance from one of the classics, particularly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by PETER BRINSON

**who was both responsible for the script and artistic direction of *Black Swan* now being shown at the Riverside Theatre in Festival Gardens.**

when, as in the case of the *Black Swan pas-de-deux*, the dance shows off the virtuosity of the artists concerned. But a classical *pas-de-deux* presented by itself must be presented in such a way that it is a story at once complete, aesthetically satisfying and understandable to a large audience which may never have seen or even heard of *Swan Lake*.

The budget of £2,500 (the film was possible on so small a sum only because of the facilities given us by Sir Alexander Korda) limited me to three dancers (Odile-Odette, Siegfried and Rothbart) so that I could not have the principals and extras which the *pas-de-deux* really needs as a background. Therefore I decided to set the dance in a ruined ballroom, the room where Siegfried's betrothal ball once took place and which (I imagined) was destroyed in the great storm created by Rothbart. I brought back Benno to return after many years to the ruins of the castle he knew so well. As he wanders about, his movements introduce us to the set; his thoughts, spoken on the screen, tell us the story of *Swan Lake*. He sees a swan's feather on the ground, perhaps dropped from some birds flying overhead. It reminds him even more poignantly of the tragedy. In his mind he sees again the fatal dance of Siegfried with Odile.

Choreographically, if he knows anything about dancing, the choreo-script writer of a film of classical ballet should make sure that changes from the accepted version—in this case the version danced at Covent Garden—are as few as possible. But some changes have to be made, and for these, good or bad, the choreo script-writer must take the blame. It would be as impossible to film a stage ballet unaltered as it would be to film a stage play.

Because of the budget and the time factor we needed to make a number of economies both in the music and the decor. I was determined, however, to make as few as possible on the musical side, since the music, more than anything else can make or mar a ballet, whether it is staged or filmed. Charles Mackerras conducted a very good orchestra, one of the largest

*A general view of the studio during the shooting of* Black Swan

ever used for a film of this character. The recording took place a week before the film went into the studio so that we could use a play-back on the set. It was in the decor, therefore, that we had to make most of our economies, though a third dimension in films really requires sets of more than usual solidity. Kenneth Rowell, the designer, was faced with the double problem of designing for a medium none of us had worked in before and of creating solid looking sets out of the relatively flimsy materials, especially large quantities of gauze, which was all that the budget allowed. His was the most difficult task and you must judge for yourselves how far he has been successful.

On the technical side we had behind us the experience of the four stereoscopic films made for the Festival of Britain last year. But none of these was a ballet film and none, particularly, included anything quite so fast moving as a dancer's feet. Leonard Reeve, the director, and Bernard Davies, the cameraman, had to shoot without knowing how their work would appear on a three-dimensional screen. Because of this it was necessary to eliminate many of the more imaginative shots which would have been possible with an ordinary camera. The director, so to speak, filmed the dance straight and on the basis of this experience we can work out a fuller cinematic treatment for the next film, knowing the possibilities.

Problems of this kind affected everyone, including the dancers, who had to do far more dancing than would normally be necessary. This is saying something because film-making for dancers is an exhausting business under any circumstances. But for the willingness of Beryl Grey, John Field and David Paltenghi to meet every demand the director made of them, particularly in dancing and re-dancing sections of the ballet whilst the camera angles were worked out and the camera movement rehearsed, the film would never have been finished on time.

I am quite sure that three-dimensional films are the films of the future just as sound films and colour films are now accepted by everyone. *Black Swan*, as an experiment in a new kind of film making, works, is successful aesthetically and shows every sign of being successful financially. More than this, it is a step forward in filming ballet whatever the dimension and perhaps justifies more work of this kind for the cinema of today as well as the cinema of tomorrow. On this experience we will develop our ideas and technique according to the finance available.

## KIRSTEIN TALKS

*continued from page seven*)

But although *Dance Index* proved worthy of its existence and received due recognition, it could not survive its limited circulation. With the autumn issue of 1948 it ceased publication, after a good run of six years.

Kirstein returned to ballet production in 1946 with the formation of Ballet Society which proved a *succes d'estime*. Inside of two years it shed its elegant title, became the ward of the city fathers and was rechristened New York City Ballet. It fared so well under this new patronage that by the autumn season of 1949 it was generally conceded that the New York City Ballet had arrived. For Kirstein, the *fait accompli*, proved sheer incentive.

In the following year he took his company to England with the aplomb of a visiting potentate. The crisis that ensued was neither pleasant nor anticipated. In spite of some of the remarkable works presented, chiefly those of Balanchine, the London critics stubbornly refused to accord it the kudos it had been lead to expect. Britishers, steeped in the grandiose spectacle presented by their own Sadler's Wells Ballet and still glowing faintly from a vivid impression left by Ballet Theatre in 1946, recoiled from the shock of pure unadorned classic dancing. The general reaction could be summed up in the words of one critic who wrote at the end of the season: "Through the haze of the morning after, a few salient facts manage to emerge—the mastery of Balanchine as a choreographer; the delight of seeing dancers to whom dancing seems to be a joy as well as a job; the distressing lack of decors (financial stringency or reaction by Balanchine against the painter-dominated days of Diaghilev?); the need for more and better ballets by choreographers other than Balanchine to give variety to the repertoire. . . ."

A good deal of Kirstein's time, that season, was spent in counteracting criticism and trying to enlighten the British. He left England in an irascible mood.

This spring, Kirstein again appears in print in a volume entitled *The Classic Dance*. An effort to record the basic steps of ballet, lucidly illustrated by Carlus Dyer with a descriptive text by Muriel Stuart of the School's faculty. In the first fourteen pages Kirstein traces the historical development of classic ballet with precision-like insight. His theories about ballet, expounded briefly here, are consistent with those he stated almost twenty years ago. To Kirstein, "The most powerful essence remains, where it began, in the dance."

# Technique and artistry

by JOHN GREGORY

Approach to Dancing 8

**In this eighth article on the approach to dancing, John Gregory (Director of the School of Russian Ballet) deplores technique without artistry.**

TECHNIQUE in the ballet is the ability to perform dance movements with accomplishment and ease. No matter what the dancer undertakes, a minimum of technique will be required for him to be able to execute any meaningful movement, or any mechanical trick. Technique is the "know how to" and "be able to". Actually it is possible to know how to do a thing and yet not be able to do it; and it is also possible to do a thing without knowing or understanding the mechanics of the act.

Here lies the reason why we may find some dancers who work almost entirely by their mental powers, and others who dance by instinct and natural facility, without any real understanding or conception of what they are doing, or why? or how? Since dancing is an expression of feelings, very often the latter instinctively endowed dancers will be more successful than the former, but neither type will be completely successful. The make-up of an artist-dancer requires a union of both "know how to" and "be able to", and something more besides.

The building of technique, *i.e.* the development and control of muscles, which enables the owner to execute dance movements and feats of dexterity should evolve simultaneously with the mental assimilation of the processes of the art. In many cases the importance of developing the brain is overlooked in the class-room. Consequently many dancers would appear to suffer from arrested development, their intellect remains moribund and they never mature.

In the making of a dancer, it is not sufficient for the teacher to teach the steps of which dancing is composed. It is not enough for the pupil to learn by heart to execute each day a series of combinations and *enchainements* of steps. Undoubtedly over a period of years a daily drill, or system of repetitive exercises will develop a certain technical ability. It will produce an executant, but not necessarily an artist. The steps of dance are the bare skeleton upon which the art is built.

A technical dancer, in my opinion might be likened to the steel structure or frame-work of a building—that is to say a building without the architectural nuances of masonry, of doors, and windows, balconies and balustrades.

Such a building would be considered only half-finished. Most of the dancers one sees these days are less than half-finished. But for the most part there is no realization by these dancers of their deficiencies. There is no understanding or appreciation of the finer and deeper aspects of their art. It is not so much the fault of these dancers as of their teachers, for they have not been taught the true principles of their art.

Technique without artistry is an empty vessel, a soulless ornament. This artistry I speak of must be learned side by side with technique. Artistry, if it is to exist, must be embodied in the teaching of technique. It cannot be tacked on like a piece of embroidery when the garment is made. It is woven and stitched in the whole creative process. An article can be made in two ways: (*a*) Factory made; produced without soul or quality; (*b*) Individually made; with love and care, and knowledge. The first product will be utilitarian, prosaic, nondescript—without personality. The second will have quality and substance that speaks a truth.

Technique comes from the brain. Artistry from the heart and brain. Thus we must have union of heart and brain in the approach to dance.

Full maturity of the artist dancer comes slowly. After ten years perhaps. Unless the dancer is made aware, unless his creative soul is is released, directed and encouraged all through his training, there is little chance of the divine glow emerging.

Artistry is being crowded out of the theatre; even craftsmanship is disappearing and the dancer like all else in this machine age is becoming mechanical and inhuman. The artist dancer scarcely exists. I have even had dancers say to me, "what is the good of learning artistry, or being an artist? Nobody wants it."

I believe that a fine product will always find a market. Factory-made dancers are in abundance, but there is an insatiable demand for the great dancer, a demand that is seldom met in our time. The phenomenon of the super-dancer becomes even more rare.

I believe this is because the young apprentice dancers of today labour without sufficient guidance.

To conclude then one might say that dancing calls for two techniques; the technique of mechanics, and the technique of histrionics. In the artist dancer the two are separate yet united. The "know how to" and the "be able to" will ever be only half the battle: without the facility to interpret, without the expressive range the dancer cannot offer a totally satisfying performance.


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## SADLER'S WELLS AT COVENT GARDEN

### NOTABLE CAST CHANGES

THE 1951-52 season's three new productions behind it the Sadler's Wells company has settled down to the even tenor of repertory ballet. Even though it meets with criticism in some quarters, one of the most invigorating aspects of Sadler's Wells policy is the frequency of its cast changes. Almost immediately prior to her departure for South Africa, Nadia Nerina made a few appearances in the, can one say, title-role of *Bonne-Bouche*. Nerina danced well and looked like a cuddly Edwardian picture postcard beauty. A warm performance which made the character more of an irresponsible harum-scarum than the not uncalculating gold-digger of Pauline Clayden's creation. At a later performance April Olrich took over the same role, but unfortunately I was unable to see it. The only other principal cast change in *Bonne-Bouche* has been Philip Chatfield in Vernon's part of the Officer. Affecting a grotesque swagger and beaming with a knowledgeable leer he has given a clever character study.

### ASHTON BALLET NEEDS PERFECTION

ASHTON'S *Scenes de Ballet* is a very difficult work to do well The ballerina role needs a sophisticated brilliance and passionless exultation (which by the way is probably the reason why Fonteyn, most passionate of dancers, was comparatively unsuccessful in its creation). Rowena Jackson, a recruit to the part, has some of the qualities the role requires but, as yet, misses its heartless splendour, while her classical style is lacking in finesse, and her figure is not perfectly proportioned for a ballerina's *tu-tu*.

I feel we have still to see the potentialities of the principal cavalier role in this ballet be exploited to the full. Although John Hart comes near to success with his powerful, broad style, in no other work does British ballet show so clearly its lack of a Youskevitch. John Field, who partnered Jackson, is a most accomplished dancer but needs to impress his personality more in this part. Like one or two of our cavaliers he has a slightly apologetic air which is both unnecessary and unforgivable. Any one who can dance as well as Field should look proud of the fact, heaven knows we have seen quite a number of foreign dancers looking as pleased as Punch over far less ability! Also, a small but important point his *entrechats huit*, superb as they are, are too fiddly for this part. He would do better to revert to the "sixes" the choreographer intended.

In a work of this delicate nature to dance less than excellently is tantamount to dancing badly, consequently the *corps de ballet* was dancing badly. The four male cavaliers (Desmond Doyle and Ronald Hynd among them, being newcomers to these ranks) were good and adequate. In *Scenes de Ballet* Sadler's Wells have a jewel worthy of the setting that only intensive rehearsal can give it. Either they ought to stay behind after school until they get it right or else forget the whole thing.

### VERNON AS DAPHNIS

DAPHNIS is probably the best performance Gilbert Vernon has given since his Snob in *La Boutique Fantasque* three or four years back. Longus' bucolic hero was amply depicted and his dancing was neat and controlled. However, in his efforts to give the maximum significance to the character's state of innocence before he learnt experience from Lykanion, he contrived more than once in the first scene to look rather comically lovesick. This once remedied his interpretation could be praised unreservedly.

**Clive Barnes**

### THE DEBUT OF BERIOSOVA

THE last week of the season, June 30 to July 5, saw nightly performances of *The Sleeping Beauty*. Aurora was danced by Fonteyn, Grey and Elvin. Probably the most important event of the week was the first appearance of Svetlana Beriosova with the company on July 3.

It may well be that this particular date will go down to Sadler's Wells history as being important. In the same way as did the first appearance of little Peggy Hookham as the Young Master of Treginnis in the *Haunted Ballroom* at Sadler's Wells Theatre.

Beriosova had only seen the role three times before she came on as the Lilac Fairy. She had two days rehearsal for this, the most important debut in her career to date. That she was going to dance had not been announced but in the strange way that the ballet bush telegraph works, news seemed to get around. The assembled audience was prepared for a performance about which they would have to make allowances.

From the moment she came on with the gaggle of fairies in the prologue, she dominated the stage except, quite rightly, when she was on with Princess Aurora. At her first entrance she radiated warmth with reached to the back of the gallery. Her variation was beautiful and lyrical. Her mime with Carabosse could hardly have been bettered. She was soft yet at the same time one felt the underlying strength which was necessary to defeat the wicked fairy. In act three, her journey to the castle with the Prince was most convincing and I have never seen anyone previously explain so clearly to the Prince, the meaning of the sleeping figures which they have to step over to reach the castle. At the end she received a great ovation.

There are people who might ask why a foreigner should dance with our national company when there are plenty of native artists arising from the ranks. This attitude is both destructive and insular. There is no company in the world that does not benefit by having artists of another country in its midst. They bring fresh blood and approach, new standards, and a healthy competitive spirit. Anyway, Beriosova has danced for most of her dancing life in this country so she can virtually be considered to be an English ballerina. One cannot commend Dame Ninette enough for being so conscious of the importance of such a move.

On the final night of the season, Fonteyn danced Princess Aurora in a manner that seemed to excel even her best. Also outstanding was the Bluebird *pas de deux* of Rowena Jackson and Brian Shaw.

In a curtain speech at the end, Dame Ninette announced that the Ashton production of Delibes' *Sylvia* will have its first performance on the opening night of the next season, September 1. During the season there will be new works by Andree Howard and John Cranko. Alicia Markova will appear as guest ballerina.

**Peter Williams**

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## Dancer you will know

## MARY MUNRO

*Born at Karachi in India.*
*Joined the Rambert Ballet after the Australian tour; first appeared in London in Ballet at Eight at the Mercury Theatre. Is now a principal dancer. Married to Cecil Bates. Principal roles: Giselle in* Giselle, *Act I; Valse in* Les Sylphides; *Milkmaid in* Facade; *Mortal born under Venus in* The Planets; *Fourth Song in* Dark Elegies; *Canzonetta in* Soirée Musicale; *Mermaid in* Mermaid; *La Goulue in* Bar aux Folies Bergère; *in* Czernyana, Peter and the Wolf *and* Winter Night; *Madeleine in* The Eve of St. Agnes. *Principal creations: Green in* Prismatic Variations; (*for Ballet Workshop*) *principal role in* Ronde Finale.

SHE first attracted attention after the Australian tour with her dancing of the Mortal under Venus in Tudor's ballet *The Planets*. In time she was entrusted with more and more of the leading roles in the Rambert repertory, until now she is one of the company's principal dancers.

When she first took over the name part in *Mermaid* she gave a sensitive performance as that sea-changed lady, but later her portrayal became slightly dulled down by routine. She has shown a capacity for comedy as La Goulue in *Bar aux Folies Bergères*, and possibly her most notable performance to date has been in the tiny part of the Milkmaid in *Facade*, of which role she is perhaps the best contemporary exponent.

For some years her dancing has been rather colourless and lacking in the individuality that immediately claims a role for its own. Performances like her Madeleine in *The Eve of St. Agnes* were immaculately competent yet little more. However in Cecil Bates' recent dramatic *pas de deux Ronde Finale*, produced at Ballet Workshop, she possessed a new power of expression and a striking beauty of movement. When the Rambert Ballet returns to London it is likely she will be seen to have advanced considerably as a dancer.

**Clive Barnes**

*Mary Munro as the discarded lover in Walter Gore's ballet* Winter Night. *To Rachmaninoff's second piano concerto, the work had its first performance during the Rambert Australian tour. After an absence it has now returned to the repertoire. The role was created by Sally Gilmour and later given by Margaret Hill*

*Photo: Gordon Anthony*

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# SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE BALLET

## THE RAKE GOES HOME

NINETTE DE VALOIS' *The Rake's Progress* was first created for the Sadler's Wells Theatre in 1935. Since then it has travelled with the first company to Covent Garden and also on tour. In larger theatres it lost some of its original power. On June 18 it returned to its home in Rosebery Avenue.

The years have, on the whole, treated the work kindly. It was one of the first works to use a truly English background and it is curious that since then there have veen few others to use this country as a source of inspiration. The beautiful decors and costumes of the late Rex Whistler remain as good as ever. Gavin Gordon's most apt score received harsh treatment from the orchestra who seemed intent on making some of the nastiest noises imaginable.

Alexander Grant made guest appearances in the title role for the first performances. Fine artist though he is, this does not seem to be his part. He danced it as well as it has ever been danced but he did not seem to have any real feeling for the style of the period. His interpretation was like his Barber in *Mam'zelle Angot*. His facial expression is rather too set in a grotesque mask—more like Rowlandson than Hogarth. He was very moving in the final scene, in Bedlam, and really gave a feeling of a human racked with disease and dissipation.

## HOGARTHIAN SUPPORT

THE rest of the company played splendidly. Particularly David Poole as The Tailor and a loony sailor Stanley Holden as The Gentleman with a Rope, and Donald Britton as The Dancing Master. The brothel scene was more realistic than it has been for many years and Stella Claire made the blowsiest trollop that can have graced the Wells stage since its last period of decline.

The role of the Betrayed Girl is not an easy one. Originally created by Markova, whom it never really suited in spite of a beautiful interpretation, it has been recently given with poignancy by Julia Farron at Covent Garden. In almost every respect, Sheilah O'Reilly seemed ideal. She still has a lot to learn but the basis is sound and she only needs to build-up on her present performance. What a useful artist she is ! Almost every character role she attempts, is given with such distinction. In classical roles she has certain limitations but in almost everything else she has proved to be a dancer of a quality almost unique in English ballet. Let us hope that some choreographer will soon take advantage of this and create for her a part of major importance.

During the autumn season, which opens at Sadler's Wells on August 29, the title role will be played by both David Blair and Pirmin Trecu. It will be interesting to see how they fare in what must now be considered to be an English classic role.

**Peter Williams**

*Tamara Karsavina after the lecture she gave on mime at the Rudolph Steiner Hall on June 8. She is seen talking to Anton Dolin and Nathalie Leslie. John Gilpin, on the left, is looking in the other direction*

*Photo: G. B. L. Wilson*

## IMPROVED PASTORALE

WHEN it was first produced last year Hugh Stevenson's designs for Cranko's *Pastorale* received a certain amount of criticism. As the decor was originally intended for the same choreographer's earlier *divertissement Adieu*, this was scarcely surprising. Now Stevenson has re-set and largely re-costumed the ballet, which gains greatly from its new look.

In place of the classical pillars and red bunting which the back-cloth formerly depicted, is painted an attractive copse. The eighteenth century furbelows of many of the costumes have also been eliminated, the dancers now being all dressed in the simple pseudo-pastoral manner which was previously confined to the ballet's rustic characters. This gives the work a unity of period and place which it before lacked. In parts of America, *Pastorale* was apparently preferred to *Harlequin in April* and *Pineapple Poll*. Its new guise makes this judgment, although still strange, a little less inexplicable. Certainly Elaine Fifield is seen to better advantage as Diaphenia than in almost any other role. Her lightness of footwork, her speed in turns and coy flirtatiousness (this last far more delicately done than when she created the part) are beguiling.

## SUPPORT FOR SWANS

THE departure of both Michael Hogan and Robert Lunnon from the company's ranks has left Svetlana Beriosova's Odette bereft of a Siegfried. Consequently David Blair, who makes an excellent partner for her in many ballets, was called upon in *Swan Lake* Act 2. He is a fine partner, safe and unobtrusive, with a good bearing and that certain indispensable air of showmanship. (It is perhaps strange that Blair much more than John Gilpin appears to be Dolin's spiritual heir.) But however sure was his mastery over the mechanics of Siegfried's role, he is at present incapable of investing it with the Romantic feeling which elevates Siegfried from a casual class-room cavalier to Ivanov's peerage.

The style required, very often, though not by Blair, misinterpreted as an emasculated flurry of flickering eye-lashes and exquisite play with well-manicured hands, is dangerously difficult to produce; it can so easily look sissy. But the far-away look of enchantment, the measured gallantry of gesture, the whole box of Romanticism's tricks must be at the artist's disposal, and then it is up to him to ensure that their use is appropriate to his sex.

Beriosova is a good Odette and at one performance at least she was outstanding. It may be that she suggests more the Swan-Ballerina than the Swan-Queen and that her interpretation needs the final dappling of light and shade that in ten years time will lend contrast to the finished product, but this is already an Odette of the grand Danilova school.

Doreen Tempest danced well as one of the Leading Swans: it would be interesting to see her as Odette a little later on.

## FRESH DAGO, TIRED PERSIAN

A FOOT-INJURY to Stanley Holden put David Poole into the Dago's part in *Facade*. Obviously underrehearsed—Poole spent much of the finale looking lost—it would be unfair to criticise it if it were not for the promise this hurried preliminary sketch suggested. The entrance to the Tango was excellently done. Sensibly avoiding Holden's clever but personal approach to the role, Poole has reverted to the original gigolo conception of Ashton's Dago.

*Khadra* is not wearing as well as it might have done. Exoticism, even the tupenny coloured variety, is apt to turn sour with keeping. However Sheilah O'Reilly dances the title-role with spirited vivacity, and Honor Frost's decor and costumes still charm the eye. David Blair has assumed the role of the Persian Lover which he dances well, even though it is a rather disappointing and inconclusive part.

Other portrayals new to London have included Maureen Bruce as Mdll. Theodore and Peter Wright as Mr. Taylor in *The Prospect Before Us*.

**Clive Barnes**

*Krishna Kutty as Bhasmasura in the Kathakali dance-drama,* The Boon. *He is now appearing with Shirin Vajifdar at the Comedy Theatre, in a programme of Indian dances*

*Born in Malabar, he toured India at the age of twelve with the great teacher Shankaran Nambudri. He was invited by the Maharaja of Travancore to join his palace Kathakali company. This is one of the greatest honours a Kathakali dancer can receive. Here he was asked by Menaka, who had one of the most important schools and companies in India, to teach in her school. Remaining there for five years, he established his own school in Bombay where he began to compose ballets. He is today one of the leading exponents of Kathakali in the world*

*The company in which he is now dancing was reviewed in our July issue*

# DANCES FROM JUGOSLAVIA

IT seems a pity that this programme presented by the Music Circle of the Overseas League on July 6, could not have been given before the recent season of Yugoslav dancing at the Cambridge Theatre. We should have all been able to appreciate the season with great knowledge.

Peter Brinson introduced the two dancers, Vera Marcovitch and Veseljko Sulic, in a number of dances from Macedonia, Serbia, Croatia and Dalmatia. The different rhythms, character, and formation of the dances was most clearly explained. In spite of a floor that must have been most unsympathetic to the dancers, they gave everything with great spirit and charm. The orchestra which accompanied them would have been better had it contained some instruments nearer to those which are actually employed. The tempi *seemed* to cause the dancers a little trouble. Probably a number of accordions would have given a better effect.

A few more entertainments as attractive as this one would do a lot to help towards our further understanding of the arts of other countries.

## TELEVISION

THE Television production of *Pineapple Poll* on June 26 brings up again the problem of what is, and what is not suitable ballet for the Television. Despite the fact that it was expertly produced and well-danced. Cranko's comedy lost much of its glamour and excitement. *Enchainements* covering the whole stage were cramped by the smallness of the studio. While having to shoot the *corps-de-ballet* in long shot in order to reproduce pattern, robbed them of their all-important personalities. This gave the effect of watching the ballet through the wrong end of opera-glasses. A great many of the entrances and exits lost their point because the cameras were lingering on a previous solo. Until such a time as a large stage and more mobile cameras can be used, ballets with integral ensemble work will misfire through the change of medium.

I do not wish to blame the producer, Philip Bate, for this. His camera was always at the main point of action. It was just unfortunate that something important was going on elsewhere. The audience is frequently able to watch two things at once, while the television camera is forced to concentrate on one.

David Blair danced, as always, impeccably and with great bravura. But, perhaps through having performed the role too often and too frequently, he now tends to over-emphasise Captain Belaye's fussiness until it becomes mincing, an unlikely trait for a ship's captain and the idol of Portsmouth. Elaine Fifield has lost some of the gusto which she originally brought to the role, but she is still perkily lovable. David Poole, an actor as much as a dancer, is perfect for television. His simple Jasper, at times hopeful and at times pathetic, really reaches the heart. Stella Claire as Blanche retains her original conception of the sugar-sweet giddy girl, but Sheilah O'Reilly's Mrs. Dimple was not allowed enough camera-time to make a full impact.

Jeffrey Solomons

## *Ballet Correspondents*

*(Abbreviations: b.c.—ballet correspondence; m.—male; f.—female; m.a.—my age; o.i.—other interests; l.s.—languages; p.r.—photograph requested.)*

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## *Clubs*

LONDON

*The London Ballet Circle, Sec.: Stanley Hawkins, 132 Kensington Park Road, London, W.11*

THE 1952 season of the London Ballet Circle has shown many events of great interest. Lectures and demonstrations presented on the third Sunday of each month have been well supported, and everyone who attended enjoyed, and profited by them. A very few of the names that have been announced from our platform are Mme. Rambert, who gave us a wholly delightful discourse and demonstration of the First Act of *Giselle* and whom we hope will return to elucidate on the Second; Violetta Elvin, who spoke on her experience in the Soviet Ballet schools; Igor Schwezoff, the famous author of the prize-winning biography *Borzoi* and international teacher and choreographer; Katherine Dunham, with her designer husband, John Pratt, who spoke of her life and her beliefs concerning the dance; Svetlana Beriosova, who gave a charming talk on the recent tour of the Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet in the U.S.A.; the most recent and completely spontaneous talk on June 15, was given by Anton Dolin. A most natural speaker, he was not afraid of making comments on dancers, the press, productions and even himself; his answers to the many and varied questions were likewise free from inhibitions. As an interesting contrast to Mr. Dolin, it is hoped to present a prominent member of the New York City Ballet at our next meeting on July 21.

Film Programmes have proved a great success. These include the first London performance of *Ballerina*, a French full-length feature film, the English premiere of *A la Memoire d'un Hero* and *Mephisto Valse;* also other interesting Russian, American and British films, showing Plisetskaya, Chabukiani, José Limon and the English Folk Dance Society.

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*Hans Beck dancing in* Napoli *with Madame Borchsenius*
*Photo: Peter Elfelt*

**On June 10, at the age of 91, Hans Beck died. He was the former Ballet Master at the Royal Theatre, Copenhagen.**

IN the history of Danish ballet four names remain outstanding, representatives as they are of periods when ballet flourished in Denmark. The first is Galeotti whose ballet *Les Caprices du Cupidon* is still in the repertoire and is generally considered to be the oldest ballet still being given (*Fille mal Gardee* may be a few months older but it has not, as has the Danish ballet, remained with its original choreography untouched). The second is that great choreographer and ballet master, Auguste Bournonville. The third is Hans Beck. The fourth is Harald Lander. It is interesting to see how the ballet during the reign of these four men has always been flourishing. The periods between have been notable for a marked decline.

When Beck took over the job of Ballet Master in 1894, a job which he had no wish to take but was urgently pressed to accept, the ballet was at a low ebb after the many glorious years of Bournonville. The art was considered a nice finish to an evening at the theatre, nothing more. Ballet was not held in esteem either by the public or by the theatre.

Beck made his debut in 1879 and was watched by Bournonville who had retired from the theatre many years previously. So impressed was he by the young dancer that he said he would come out of retirement and make several new ballets for him. Two days later, however, he died.

As a choreographer, Beck was not outstanding. His best work, *The Little Mermaid*, was to have been revived by Harald Lander this season. It is as a dancer and preserver of the Bournonville tradition that Beck will live in the history of ballet. He was considered to be the best male dancer of his time. His influence was enormous and the reason that the present generation of Danish male dancers is so virile and unaffected is entirely due to him and his preservation of tradition.

He carefully and lovingly preserved more than fifteen Bournonville ballets, the Galeotti ballet, and was also responsible for the fine production of *Coppelia* which is one of the prides of the Danish ballet. Had it not been for him there would hardly be a Danish classic in the repertoire to-day.

In 1915 he danced for the last time. His last appearance being in the role of Gennaro, the hero of Bournonville's *Napoli*. After that he withdrew as a dancer and ballet master.

After he left the theatre he put himself at the disposal of the theatre at all times when his services could be of any use. One of the first things that Harald Lander did when he was appointed ballet master was to co-operate with Beck. Much that had been lost in the intervening years was then restored.

Beck's last service to the Royal Theatre was in 1949 when a ballet to celebrate the 100 years of the theatre's constitution was being prepared. *Homage to Bournonville*, as it was called, consisted of many dances taken from the various Bournonville ballets.

**Bent Schonberg.**

## U.S.A.

THERE is little dancing in New York City at the moment. Ballet Theatre has a date at Red Rocks, Denver, Colorado, on July 26; Hollywood Bowl, California, on August 7, 8, 9, 14 and 15, and in the autumn will open (September 25) at the Metropolitan Opera House for a season. The company will tour ninety-two American and Canadian cities starting April, 1953. Gemze de Lappe currently dancing in *Paint Your Wagon* will join Ballet Theatre as soloist for their season at the Met this autumn. Apparently Miss de Lappe has not appeared in a ballet company (Michel Fokine's) since the age of nine. She has danced, however, in numerous musicals, including the current *The King and I*.

Gene Kelly now appearing in dance films in London (*Invitation to the Dance*, etc.) has invited Igor Youskevitch to star in one of them. Youskevitch, who is still *premier danseur* of Ballet Theatre, left for England on July 7. Mary Ellen Moylan, another Ballet Theatre star, has also been screen-tested for it.

The Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo, in its own quiet way, has been reassembling its forces. Shorn of Danilova and Franklin it will forge ahead, undaunted, with Leon Danelian and Nina Novak as standard bearers. Reinforcements, by way of soloists, will be Yvonne Chouteau, Gertrude Tyven, Oleg Tupine, Alan Howard and Victor Moreno. Their next date will be the Greek Theatre, Hollywood, Calif. on July 9 (for two weeks). No talk of new works for this company, as yet.

Michael Todd, producer of mammoth musicals ,will stage the little known Strauss operetta *A Night in Venice* at the Jones Beach Stadium this summer. The huge cast will include 36 dancers—24 girls and 12 boys. Daniel Nagrin will be in charge of choreography with Gloria Gilbert as leading dancer. Peter Dehn and John Kelly (formerly of Ballet Russe de Monte Carlo), Virginia Barnes (of the Metropolitan Opera Ballet), will be among the dancers in the cast. Nagrin will run the gamut of character dances by including two waltzes, a gallop, a czardas, a tarantella and a can-can in the choreography. The revolving stage and its surrounding water should make this all the more effective.

Bambi Linn and husband Rod Alexander are dancing in night clubs and on television. Tatiana Grantzeva and Nicholas Polajenko (Ballet de Paris) will team for Ted Shawn's touring company this summer. Bunty Kelly, still in New York. She was last seen dancing with Ballet Theatre (four shows a day) at the Warner cinema. Danilova, home, is scheduled for an appearance at New York's Lewisohn Stadium this summer as is Mia Slavenska.

**David Raher**

## ANTON DOLIN'S SEARCH FOR A TEACHER

*continued from page eight*)

I was in Paris during the month of May, a month when many famous dancers were there, all taking lessons from one or other of the teachers I have mentioned. The famous French ballerina, Yvette Chauviré could be seen arriving every day with her small suitcase with its precious little dancing shoes, tights and tunic, at the Salle Wacker. There, in the little foyer bar, between classes and private lessons, would congregate so many great dancers and at least three great teachers. Not far away is the studio of Madame Egorova.

Where, I wonder, will all these artists find in London, teachers with the same knowledge and quality that they find so easily in Paris, New York or Hollywood? Where is there anyone comparable to that great and wonderful teacher, Vera Volkova, now living and teaching in Copenhagen and lost, unfortunately, to London?

Yes, it is indeed a strange and not particularly envious position for England's dancers.

*Fred Mastaire, a member of the Vienna State Opera Ballet, dancing on the roof of Vienna's only skyscraper* (15 *floors*) *with the spire of St. Stephen's cathedral seen in the background*

*Photo: Herbert Kofler*

# Ballet Dates

### NEW YORK CITY BALLET AT THE ROYAL OPERA HOUSE COVENT GARDEN

| | |
|---|---|
| **July** | |
| **28** | *Mother Goose Suite, Concerto Barocco, Orpheus, Symphony in C* |
| **29** | *Mother Goose Suite, Concerto Barocco, Orpheus, Symphony in C* |
| **30 (M & E)** | *Serenade, The Duel, Orpheus, Pied Piper* |
| **31** | *Card Game, Concerto Barocco, Age of Anxiety, La Valse* |
| **August** | |
| **1** | *Card Game, Concerto Barocco, Age of Anxiety, La Valse* |
| **2 (M)** | *Mother Goose Suite, Lac de Cygnes* (Act 2), *A la Francaix, Cake Walk* |
| **2 (E)** | *Serenade, Prodigal Son, The Cage, Cake Walk* |
| **4** | *Symphonie Concertante, La Gloire, Firebird, Pied Piper* |
| **5** | *Symphonie Concertante, La Gloire, Firebird, Pied Piper* |
| **6 (M)** | *Card Game, Concerto Barocco, Prodigal Son, Bouree Fantasque* |
| **6 (E)** | *Lac des Cygnes* (Act 2), *Four Temperaments, A la Francaix, La Valse* |
| **7** | *Lac des Cygnes* (Act 2), *Four Temperaments, A la Francaix, Bouree Fantasque* |
| **8** | *Lac des Cygnes* (Act 2), *Four Temperaments, A la Francaix, Bouree Fantasque* |
| **9 (M)** | *Serenade, La Gloire, A la Francaix, Firebird* |
| **9 (E)** | *Caracole, The Cage, The Duel, La Valse* |
| **11** | *Card Game, Divertimento, Age of Anxiety, Bourree Fantasque* |
| **12** | *Card Game, Prodigal Son, Serenade, Pied Piper* |
| **14 (M)** | *Serenade, Age of Anxiety, A la Francaix, Pied Piper* |
| **(E)** | *Symphonie Concertante, The Cage, Firebird, Cake Walk* |
| **14** | *Four Temperaments, The Cage, A la Francaix, Symphony in C* |
| **15** | *Concerto Barocco, Orpheus, Lilac Garden, Firebird* |
| **13 (M)** | *The Duel, Four Temperaments, Lilac Garden, Firebird* |
| **(E)** | *Four Temperaments, Firebird, A la Francaix, Symphony in C* |
| **18** | *Caracole, Prodigal Son, The Cage, Bourree Fantasque* |
| **19** | *The Duel, Swan Lake, Divertimento, Cake Walk* |
| **20 (M)** | *Symphony in C, Age of Anxiety, Lilac Garden, Cake Walk* |
| **(E)** | *Caracole, Orpheus, Lilac Garden, La Valse* |
| **21** | *The Duel, Swan Lake, La Valse, Pied Piper* |
| **22** | *Mother Goose Suite, Divertimento, Prodigal Son, Symphony in C* |
| **23 (M)** | *Mother Goose Suite, Firebird, Serenade, Pied Piper* |
| **(E)** | *Concerto Barocco, Age of Anxiety, Symphony in C, Pied Piper* |

### SADLER'S WELLS BALLET AT COVENT GARDEN

| | |
|---|---|
| **September** | |
| **3** | *Sylvia* (Fonteyn). First performance |
| **4** | *Sylvia* (Elvin) |
| **5** | *Sylvia* (Grey) |
| **6 (M)** | *Sylvia* (Elvin) |
| **(E)** | *Sylvia* (Fonteyn) |
| **8** | *Sylvia* (Grey) |
| **9** | *Sylvia* (Fonteyn) |
| **10** | *Sylvia* (Elvin) |
| **11** | *Sylvia* (Grey) |
| **12** | *Sylvia* (Fonteyn) |

### RAMBERT BALLET AT OPEN AIR THEATRE, FINSBURY PARK

| | |
|---|---|
| **July** | |
| **28-30** | *Giselle* (Act I), *Fireflies, Simple Symphony, Bar aux Folies Bergeres* |
| **31-Aug. (Mat. Sat.)** | *Les Sylphides, Plaisance, Le Jardin aux Lilas, Facade* |
| **Aug.** | |
| **4** | New Theatre, Oxford |
| **11 & 18** | Repertory Theatre, Colchester |
| **Sept.** | |
| **1** | Civic Theatre, Chesterfield |
| **8** | Guildhall, St. Ives |

### FESTIVAL BALLET AT THE ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL

| | |
|---|---|
| **July** | |
| **31 to Aug. 4 (Mats. Sat. & Mon.)** | *Swan Lake* (Act I), *Don Quixote—pas de deux, Vision of Marguerite, Black Swan—pas de deux, Prince Igor* (with full choir and orchestra) |
| **Aug. 5 to 9 (Mat. Sat.)** | *The Nutcracker* (Full Version), *Le Beau Danube* |
| **11 to 14 (Mat. Thurs.)** | *Sheherazade, The Pas de Quatre, Le Spectre de la Rose, Symphonic Impressions* |
| **15 and 16 (Mat. Sat.)** | *Giselle, Harlequinade—pas de deux, Fiesta Espagnole* |
| **18 and 19** | *The Nutcracker* (Full Version), *Le Beau Danube* |
| **20 and 21 (Mat. Thurs.)** | *Swan Lake* (Act I), *Don Quixote, Vision of Marguerite, Black Swan, Prince Igor* |

### SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE BALLET AT SADLER'S WELLS THEATRE

Autumn season opens on August 29 with *Les Sylphide* *Rake's Progress*, and *Pineapple Poll.*

| | |
|---|---|
| **Aug.** | |
| **30(m)** | *Coppelia* (Lane, Trecu, Holden) |
| **Sept.** | |
| **4** | Revival of *Fete Etrange*, 1st. performance of Cranko's *Reflection* |

### RAM GOPAL INDIAN BALLET

| | |
|---|---|
| **Aug.** | |
| **4** | Grand Theatre, Leeds |
| **15** | Olympic Theatre, Dublin |
| **25** | Olympic Theatre, Dublin |
| **Sept.** | |
| **1,2,3** | Tour of smaller Irish cities |
| **8** | Festival of Berlin, Hebbel Theatre |

### INTERNATIONAL BALLET

| | |
|---|---|
| **August** | |
| **4** | A season in the Open Air Arena, Verona |

### INDIAN DANCES

Shirin Vajifadr and Krishna Kutty with company, at the Comedy Theatre, London, from July 22.

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**The Sadler's Wells Theatre Ballet**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Aug.** | |
| **18-20 (Mat. Wed.)** | *Coppelia* |
| **21-23 (Mat. Sat.)** | *Les Rendezvous, Reflection* (new ballet by Cranko), *Pineapple Poll* |

**The New York City Ballet**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Aug.** | |
| **25-27 (Mat. Wed.)** | *Swan Lake* (Act II), *The Cage, Bayou* (first performance in Great Britain), *Bourrée Fantasque* |
| **28-30 (Mat. Sat.)** | *The Firebird, The Pied Piper , Ballade, Galaxy* |

**Grand Ballet du Marquis de Cuevas**

| | |
|---|---|
| **Sept.** | |
| **1-3 (Mat. Wed.)** | Programme will include *Prisoner of the Caucasus* (first performance in Great Britain) and *Tarasiana* |
| **4-6 (Mat. Sat.)** | Programme will include *Night Shadow* and *Enchanted Mill* |

## When to see them

### AT FESTIVAL HALL

#### Nathalie Leslie

| | |
|---|---|
| **July** | |
| **31 & Aug. 1** | *Swan Lake, Black Swan* |
| **2** | *Don Quixote* |
| **3, 4 (M & E)** | *Black Swan* |

#### Sonia Arova

| | |
|---|---|
| **July** | |
| **31 & Aug. 1** | *Don Quixote* |
| **2** | *Swan Lake, Black Swan* |
| **3, 4 (M)** | *Don Quixote* |
| **4 (E)** | *Swan Lake, Black Swan* |

#### Belinda Wright

| | |
|---|---|
| **July** | |
| **31 & Aug. 1** | *Vision of Marguerite* |
| **2, 3, 4 (M)** | *Swan Lake, Vision of Marguerite* |
| **4 (E)** | *Vision of Marguerite* |

#### Anton Dolin

| | |
|---|---|
| **July** | |
| **31** | *Swan Lake* |
| **August** | |
| **2** | *Don Quixote* |
| **3, 4 (M)** | *Swan Lake* |
| **4 (E)** | *Don Quixote* |

#### John Gilpin

| | |
|---|---|
| **July** | |
| **31 & Aug. 1** | *Vision of Marguerite, Black Swan* |
| **2** | *Vision of Marguerite* |
| **3, 4 (M & E)** | *Vision of Marguerite, Black Swan* |

#### Oleg Briansky

| | |
|---|---|
| **July** | |
| **31** | *Don Quixote, Vision of Marguerite* |
| **August** | |
| **1** | *Vision of Marguerite, Don Quixote* |
| **2** | *Swan Lake, Vision of Marguerite, Black Swan* |
| **3, 4 (M)** | *Vision of Marguerite, Don Quixote* |
| **4 (E)** | *Swan Lake, Vision of Marguerite* |

*Romero de Cordoba who has been appearing in a revue in Barcelona. This is the second in a series of photographs by Vince who discovered the dancer during a recent trip to Spain.*

**Our September number will contain pages of photographs chosen by the famous American photographer, Walter E. Owen. A review, with many photographs, of the New York City Ballet season at Covent Garden. Photographs of *The Rake's Progress* at Sadler's Wells. *Coppelia* in Copenhagen. The dancers of Festival Ballet. A biographical study of Brian Shaw. Peter Revitt will start a new series of cartoons. Cover of Svetlana Beriosova.**

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